

**ACHIEVING GENDER EQUITY THROUGH UNICEF INTERVENTION- THE
SARA COMMUNICATION INITIATIVE (SCI):
AN EXAMINATION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL AND CAPABILITIES IN TWO
SELECTED MALAWIAN RURAL SCHOOLS**

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By

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ABSTRACT

The Sara Communication Initiative (SCI), a girls' intervention programme, was introduced by the Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi (FAWEMA), to address girls' low enrolment and high dropout from school. NORAD and UNICEF initially funded the SCI. FAWEMA is currently the custodian of the SCI in Malawi.

The purpose of this study was to determine stakeholder perceptions of the extent to which the social capital and capabilities of girls had been enhanced through the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) in the two selected rural school communities of Chikwawa district. Two theoretical frameworks were utilized, Nussbaum (2001) and Sen's (1999) capability development model and the concept of social capital theory based on Putnam (2000) and Coleman (1998).

A case study using mixed methods was used to examine the two cases. Data collection consisted of questionnaires, focus groups, structured interviews, document analysis and class observations. The study engaged 59 students, 30 students from Eastern school and 29 students from Southern school. Parents' focus groups were attended by a total of 41 parents, 21 at Eastern school and 20 at Southern school. The researcher also interviewed four teachers, two from each school, as well as the National Coordinator for FAWEMA. Class observations took place at both venues and at the junior and senior primary school levels.

Descriptive data analysis was conducted using an SPSS package. Data from the focus group discussions were taped, transcribed, and analyzed thematically.

From the data it was concluded that comic books were an integral part of the SCI meetings and they highlighted some major challenges that girls experienced. T-shirts

were also powerful in conveying SCI messages, apart from providing decent clothing for needy students. The study noted that there were more girls, than boys participating in the SCI.

In addition, it was found that basic and internal capabilities were limited for girls. As a result, although many girls enrolled in school, at the beginning of the school year the enrolment of girls dropped off sharply. The reasons for girls dropping out of school included heavy workload, poverty, sexual harassment, early pregnancies, early marriages, lack of motivation, lack of encouragement, and lack of female role models. In regard to external conditions, which comprise the material and institutional environments, the findings of this study were that although the family, the school, and development agencies assisted in providing some resources for the pupils to enable them to stay in school the provisions were not adequate.

As well, the study found that some tenets of social capital were evident. Social networks were apparent between parents/guardians and their children/wards, teachers and pupils, teachers and parents, female pupils and the UNICEF mothers' groups, and the development committees. Institutional trust appeared to be lacking in some cases. There was a lack of trust of male teachers and older schoolboys by the parents because there were no female role models for the girls at the schools. Organizations in the form of development agencies were also considered an important resource to the two communities.

Finally, it was found that the Sen Capabilities Model had some limits to its applicability in a developing country. In addition, it was concluded that while the SCI enhanced the social capital for girls, in all likelihood the community members require attitudinal and cultural change.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate the culmination of my learning to my dad and mom,
Bambo Mputi and Mai Ananjera
who made all this possible by their words of encouragement & prayers
“Everything comes to those who wait on the Lord.”

And to

My loving husband
Eric James Sankhulani
for his companionship, support,
love, and patience on this journey.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

*“Whatever else my people may need,
I want my people to have adequate food,
clothing, and houses that do not leak.”*

(Late Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda-
The first president of Malawi.)

1.1 Introduction

The above quote listed the three basic human needs of food, clothing, and shelter, which were and continue to be necessary for basic human existence. Malawians, like all humanity must consider politics, cultures, and economics in examining how best to meet the three basic needs. Special challenges for Malawians include low economic growth, natural disasters, poor governance of public structures, lack of natural resources of high value, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), and high population growth. Low levels of education, some gender-insensitive socio-cultural practices, structural adjustment policies, and human-made calamities, such as wars, have exacerbated the above problems. The Tanzanian National Website (2003) stated that, “at the international level, an unequal economic and political partnership, as reflected in unfavourable terms of trade and other transactions for developing countries is also a major cause of poverty in developing countries” (p. 3).

While economists have traditionally focused on national development, a new approach focuses on human development. Prabhu (2003) suggested that the human development approach “is rooted in a vision of development that sees equality and justice as essential values that must be built into the processes of economic growth if they are to be sustainable. Gender equality is therefore integral to human development” (p. 1). Sen (1999) believes that it is a basic human right to develop one’s capabilities. This right must be enshrined as a societal responsibility. Men, women, boys, and girls must have the right to develop their potential so that they can advance their lives. Gender equity is considered crucial to development; when women and girls are left behind in economic development, the impact on society is serious (UNICEF, 2004, pp. 17-18; Heward, 1999, p. 5). To ensure sustainable development, both male and female members of society should be engaged as agents in the process of development.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2006) defined sustainable development as

a moral precept as well as a scientific concept. It is closely linked to peace, human rights, and equity as much as to ecology or global warming. And if it obviously concerns the natural sciences, economics and politics, it is also a cultural issue. Founded on the values particular to one society or another, it implies that we recognize the complex interdependence of human needs and the natural environment. (p. 1)

Sub-Saharan African countries are adopting different alternatives to achieve sustainable development. Since initially most colonized countries were concerned with modernization, the realization of the limits of national capacities has led governments to focus on eradicating poverty, preserving the natural environment, improving the position of women, increasing access to education, and community involvement in decision-making (UN, 2006, p. 4).

Malawi is one of the developing countries whose current level of education is low. Malawi's situation echoes the statement by UNESCO (2005), which reiterated, "In many countries, the current level of basic education is too low, severely hindering the national plans for a sustainable future. It is this Education for sustainable development (ESD) thrust of basic quality of education that mostly aligns itself to Education for All (EFA) and the Milllenium Development Goals (MDGs)" (p. 1). UNESCO further reported that concern for quality is not limited to countries with low levels of educational attainment but also in developed countries. Although access is less of an issue in these countries, retention in schools is a challenge because some students leave school before completion. Such students are usually not ready to live and compete in the 21st century economies (p. 1). In order to achieve sustainable development, education should not be considered as an end in itself, but as a means to change behaviour and lifestyles, to disseminate knowledge, and to develop skills (UNESCO, 2005, p. 2).

In this study, I will focus on gender equity. I am a Malawian woman and I can identify with the gender issues that other Malawian women and girls experience. The presentations given by different gender researchers addressing the causes of low access, retention, and achievement of girls in school enabled me to understand some of the gender inequalities that I had experienced as a girl at home and at school. It became apparent that the gender inequalities that I had experienced were serious social problems that needed to be addressed. As an educator, my sympathy went out to the many girls who were experiencing gender discrimination, but who could not label the ordeals or counteract them, precisely because gender inequalities are so ingrained in the cultural structure of Malawian society. These girls needed a chorus of encouraging voices that would help them speak up, and wanted the girls to be members of that chorus.

1.2 Background to the Problem

Researchers around the world have reiterated that in most developing countries, women and children have not enjoyed the benefits of development equal to their male counterparts (Human Rights Education Associates, 2006, p. 3; Kenway & Modra, p. 139; Meena, 1992, p. 12). Women and children, especially girls, have been less valued than their male counterparts (Hari, 2004, p. 4). The results of such situations have been the high prevalence of poverty which has resulted in high incidence of malnutrition in mothers and their children, high incidence of HIV/AIDS, high fertility rates, high maternal and child mortality rates, and lower family income (Forum for African Women Educationalists [FAWE], 2001, pp. 4-6). The unfortunate situation for women and girls has been maintained because women have been denied equal educational opportunities which contribute to sustainable development.

That girls' education directly contributes to sustainable development is no longer an issue. It is now well documented that educating girls and women is the single most important investment that yields maximum returns for development. The infant mortality rates decrease, children have a higher probability of getting a good education and most importantly women become income generators, which increases the economic power-base of the family. The most important issue in any country is the number of girls that have access to education and the quality of education they receive as measured by levels of retention and performance. (FAWE, 2001, p. 2)

As most governments among the developing countries became sensitized to the need for educating females, they began to respond positively. Research into the causes of low enrolment, poor retention, and poor performance of girls in schools has been conducted. An example of research related to causes of low enrolment was carried out in Malawi by Robb and Kaunda (1998) through the Girls' Attainment to Basic Literacy Education (GABLE) Social Mobilization Campaign (SMC, 1998). Issues, which were found to

prevent girls from advancing with their education, could be classified as cultural, economic, and political.

Some of the elements of unequal gender relations have been addressed by feminists. Feminist literature for example, (Munanthoko, 1992) clearly points out inequalities in society. Feminism is a term for the research which examines gender relationships between men and women. “Feminists question and challenge the origins of oppressive gender relations and attempt to develop a variety of strategies that might change those relations for the better” (p. 71). In addition to dealing with issues of justice and equality, feminists have critiqued male-dominated institutions, social values, and practices that are oppressive to women. Patriarchy is a term that has been coined to represent female oppression.

1.3 Patriarchy

Females in different parts of the world experience patriarchy in different ways.

Patriarchy is defined as

a historical system of dominance of men over women. . . . It emerged 5,000 – 6000 years ago with tribes who made warfare and conquest, subjugating other tribes and their territories as their main source of wealth. In this process, first the foreign women, then their own women were forcibly domesticated and put under the control of the dominant male. (Mies, 1986, as cited in Mies, 1998, p. 38)

Mies further explained that patriarchy is not a system that existed in all societies. Patriarchy, did not originate because of the biological differences in humans, but was a social order which can be changed. Legates (2001) stated that it is risky to generalize about patriarchy because women have had for the most part negative experiences as a result of patriarchy; however others might have benefited from it (p. 12).

In addition, “patriarchy is not so much about individual men or women and their personal and familial relationships as it is about institutions and values, politics and

culture, concepts of authority and order” (Legates, 2001, p. 12). In today’s society, constraints that women might have experienced include discrimination in formal education, exclusion from political participation, economic and sexual exploitation. Although most Western countries have achieved greater gender equality compared to most developing countries, there are issues that need to be addressed. Western patriarchy has been characterized by lower pay for women compared to men. “In general, white men have been and still are favoured with the ownership and control of property” (p. 17). As well, men have controlled women’s sexuality and fertility through social institutions such as education and medicine. Finally, women have been subjected to male violence in the form of mental, physical, and sexual abuse.

In a summary of her chapter on the development of feminist frameworks, Reynolds (1995) stated that there is “need to expand knowledge about the experiences of different categories about women in different settings over time.” Reynolds suggested the study of First Nations women, women of colour, lesbian women, or differently-abled women’s experiences in order to advance the development of feminist frameworks used in the study of administration and leadership in educational organizations.

In a study of Native women’s leadership experiences on Island Lake, Manitoba, Canada, Munroe (2004) found that women’s experiences were influenced by their culture which did not encourage women to be leaders but to stand behind their men because women were not considered equals to their men. In this group, the issue of leadership for Native women continues to be a challenge because of a strong tradition that men “carry the people” (p. 259). Munroe further explained that although some women had leadership ambitions, they backed away from opportunities because of

discrimination against female leaders. Munroe was hopeful that with time, attitudes would change and more women would take on leadership positions.

A Canadian Television News (CTV) documentary on Pakistan, entitled “Land, Gold, and Women,” aired on February 28, 2006 reported that women in that country experienced many injustices due to their gender. The reporter reiterated that the patriarchal system was very strong at all levels of society so that even when women experienced injustices such as rape, they were expected to keep quiet about it. Disclosing such phenomena could bring shame or further punishment from the male dominated institutions. When one of the victims was interviewed on the same documentary, she pointed out that one of the causes of gender oppression might be the lack of literacy and education. To prove her point, the interviewee decided to open a school for girls from her compensation money. She hoped that the situation of females might change as a result of enhanced empowerment of girls and women through education.

Although Malawi is in transition from traditional values to modernization, traditional practices that are influenced by patriarchy are pervasive. Different societal expectations are bestowed on men, women, boys, and girls. Any actions or activities outside those prescribed, carried out by the above groups, though productive, are considered deviant behaviour. Roles and responsibilities are prescribed by culture.

There is sufficient evidence to indicate that when these roles and responsibilities are productive and economic in nature, they are allocated in favour of men and boys leaving women and girls to play only reproductive roles, which are mostly not recognized economically. The impacts of these differences spread beyond the individual victim as they result into unequal power relations between men and women, unequal access to social services, high dependency on men by women and many other known poverty related problems. (Ngwira, Kamchedzera, & Semu, 2003, p. 10)

The unequal power relations between males and females in Malawi can be examined as economic constraints, cultural constraints, and political constraints.

Economic constraints which Malawian families experience have affected the educational choices that parents make for their female and male children. Although the Malawian government abolished school fees, most parents still find it difficult to provide for the indirect cost of sending girls to school. Parents have to make choices between sending their daughters or sons to school depending on who might benefit the family economically after schooling. In a report submitted to UNICEF (2000), Chimombo et al. (2000) stated,

The important thing to the family was the immediate production of income needs of the family to which children could contribute. Parents' demands for schooling conflicted with short-run income and labour needs involving their children's contribution to the subsistence form of production and the family's cash earnings. The evidence has shown that as mothers strive to meet these income needs, it is the girls who are more prone to working in the homes, and this greatly affects their performance in school. (pp. 8-9)

Parents choose to invest in boys because in a patriarchal setting, it is assumed that they will be the head of their own families and hence in a position to control financial resources. Culturally, most parents believe that it is beneficial to invest in a boy because he will be in charge of his family and will be able to return the economic needs which parents will require in their old age or in times of misfortune.

Culture plays a significant part in influencing parents to send their daughters to school. In a study of *Parents' attitudes towards girls' participation in and access to education and science, mathematics and technology (SMT) subjects*, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) (2001) found that low enrolment of girls and high dropout rate was due to the negative attitude that parents had towards the education of girls.

This negative attitude was attributed to traditional socio-cultural beliefs regarding gender roles and abilities. In African tradition and culture, women were expected to exclusively assume the roles of mothers and wives. Women were seen as nurturing beings and as such were expected to be the home makers and take care of the children. They were also expected to be obedient and subservient to the men. Women were seen as less capable, physically, mentally and in all areas outside their accepted roles, than men. As a result, women were seen as requiring protection, guidance, supervision, and leadership from men. It was thus accepted that men would fill decision making leadership capacities in society, while women played mainly a supportive/nurturing role. (Hari, 2004, p. 2)

Although the peoples of Africa have experienced socio-economic changes that have necessitated the expansion of women's roles, their attitudes have been difficult to change. Most people's perceptions of women remain the same. Most parents would rather have their daughters get married and give birth to their grandchildren than attain higher education. Such practices are perceived to elevate the parents' social status (Hari, p. 4).

Finally, at the political level, girls, who grow up to be less powerful than their brothers, have no opportunity to engage in politics within their communities and the nation. The political deprivation that women experience can be associated with other deprivations: lack of opportunity to participate in politics at different levels of society might be the result of biased distribution of economic resources, which favours male members of the family in most developing countries. Such a situation might result in the lack of resources for females to pursue education. When individuals lack literacy skills, they might not develop the necessary capabilities, to exercise their political freedoms. In his analysis, Sen (1999) examined political freedom as an instrumental freedom.

Political freedoms, broadly conceived refer to the opportunities that people have to determine who should govern and on what principles, and also include the possibility to scrutinize and criticize authorities, to have freedom of political expression and uncensored press, to enjoy the freedom to choose between different political parties and so on. (p. 38)

Although some developing countries have instituted democracy as their mode of governing, there continue to be barriers for citizens and women in particular. A higher percentage of men are involved in politics compared to women. In Malawi, for example, the present cabinet comprises 29 ministers, six of whom are women (AllAfrica, 2003, pp. 3-5). Most women in Malawi do not engage in politics because of cultural traditions, which maintain that a woman's place is in the kitchen. Female Malawians are stereotyped as preferring to be at home, raising families.

The social structures restricting women from developing their capabilities to participate politically, deny them social capabilities through social networks, social support, and autonomy. "The social networks dimension relates to the number of people in one's network, the frequency of contacts, group membership, and so forth. The social support dimension focuses on the type and amount of support that one receives" (Robeyns, 2003, p. 30). In most societies of the world, women network with fellow women within the informal setting and not the formal. Since most women engage in domestic work and unpaid care, they have little chance of communicating with people in the public arenas such as the political, economic, and legal. The result of such a situation is that women are left out of critical issues that pertain to policy-making decisions that impact on their lives.

In order to address the issues mentioned above, international donors such as United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), national governments, educators, religious leaders, parents, non-

governmental agencies, women's organizations such as the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), have developed and funded intervention programmes that attempt to enhance girls' access, retention, and achievement in schools. In Malawi, the programmes which were introduced included, Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy Education (GABLE), Gender Appropriate Curriculum (GAC), and the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI), on which this study is based.

The Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) is based on feminist ideology. Kenway and Modra (1992) stated, "feminists believe that women are located unequally in the social formation, often devalued, exploited, and oppressed. Education systems, the knowledge which they offer and the practices which constitute them are seen to be complicit in this" (p. 139). On the same issue, Mackie (1996) pointed out that on the whole women were located within the lower rungs of the social ladder, while men occupied the highest rungs of every institution. An example might be the way the economic, political, legal, family, military, educational, and religious systems are organized (p. 7). It is upon such realization that feminists have suggested strategies to address gender inequalities.

Gender discourse as a concept in the development literature has been taken up further by social relations analysts who "seek to understand the social processes that sustain the unequal distribution of resources so that power can be redistributed addressing these issues directly" (Heward, 1999, p. 3). Theorists in the development arena assert that in order to empower women, there is need to understand other factors than gender which prevent women's and girls' advancement culturally, socially, economically, and politically. The issues that are crucial in this case are participatory development through empowerment of both women and men "to ensure their

participation in the decisions that affect their lives and enable them to build their strengths and assets” (United Nations Development Programme, 1997, as cited in Heward, 1999, p. 4). The SCI program is one of the instruments for attempting the empowerment of both boys and girls who are the future leaders.

The SCI depicts the adventures of Sara, an adolescent girl who becomes a role model and a symbol of girls’ empowerment in Africa. The story concerns “push-out” from school and the heavy workload girls endure at home. It tells how Sara, with the help of her friends, uses negotiation and problem solving skills to stay in school when the odds are very much against her (UNICEF-ESARO, 1996, Intro page).

The Special Gift is one of the series of seven Sara episodes produced by the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund--Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Organization (UNICEF--ESARO). The Communication section of UNICEF--ESARO produced the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) with financial support from the government of Norway and UNICEF committees in the Netherlands, United States, and Germany, and in collaboration with UNICEF country offices in Eastern and Southern Africa. In Malawi, the Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi (FAWEMA), are the care takers of the SCI. FAWEMA is among the many African chapters that are linked to the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), a non-governmental international organization, based in Nairobi, Kenya. FAWEMA’s activities concentrate on advocacy and support for girls and women’s education. The SCI is operated as clubs within the schools that were introduced to the intervention programme. Each is assigned a coordinating teacher who organizes activities, such as debating, dancing, writing poems, and dramatizing gender concerns.

1.4 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research was to determine stakeholder perceptions of the extent to which the social capital of girls has been enhanced through the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) in two selected rural school communities of Chikwawa district. As well, the study ascertained if the SCI was a vehicle that has enabled girls to develop the necessary capabilities that would help them to contribute to Chikwawa's social capital. More specifically, the inquiry addressed the following questions:

1. What was the nature of the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) and how was it implemented?
2. What were the perceptions of students, parents, and teachers about this programme?
3. To what extent did stakeholders perceive the social capital and capabilities of girls had been enhanced through the SCI?

1.5 Significance of the Study

While it is true that access is crucial to the success of girls' education, human rights based education is more than making sure girls have access to schooling. The human rights approach focuses on conditions at home and in the community, making it possible for both girls as well as boys to attend school regularly. The human rights approach enables students to attain a certain level of education and achieve a specific set of learning objectives (UNICEF, 2004, p. 9). As mentioned earlier, women and girls' education contributes to the sustainable development in countries because it creates the space for them to develop their capabilities, which enable them to contribute and participate culturally, economically, and politically. In a global report on the status of the world's children, UNICEF (2004) pointed out:

With the rights of 65 million girls unmet and the Millenium Development Goals in peril, change is clearly needed. But it is needed at many levels and will not be achieved through enrolment drives alone. To successfully remove the barriers that prevent girls from accessing an education, and succeeding in and completing school, societies will inevitably have to deal with factors that are fundamental to the quality of life of the whole community. Girls' education is so inextricably linked with the other facets of human development that to make it a priority is also to make change on a range of other fronts, from the health and status of women to early childhood care, from nutrition, water and sanitation to community empowerment, from the reduction of child labour and other forms of exploitation to the peaceful resolution of conflicts. (p. 11)

In order to realize a favourable environment for the success of girls in school, there is need to ensure effective social networks that enhance the educational endeavours.

The USAID Impact Evaluation team (1999) on Girls Attainment in Basic Literacy Education (GABLE), reported successes and programme challenges. Among the successes were that GABLE “helped make girls’ education a visible element on the national agenda” (USAID, 1999, p. 13). One of the shortcomings was the weak links among programme elements, such as the lack of affiliation between the Ministry of Education with the village-based study, and the lack of linkages between the Social Mobilization Campaign to the Ministry of Education. The effect of the lack of proper networks resulted in the Ministry of Education missing opportunities to receive necessary feedback from the findings of the Mobilization Campaign. Similarly, GABLE missed out on the communication from the Ministry of Education concerning new policies which were to impact Malawi’s schools, some of which were engaged in the GABLE initiative (USAID-CDIE, 1999, p. 15).

I utilized Sen’s capabilities approach and social capital theories to determine how the SCI was improving (or not) the capabilities of girls and women in Malawi. This study attempted to determine if as a result of the programme, schools could move towards creating a non-biased school environment for girls that would enhance their

equitable opportunities for education. The perspective of the SCI was to sensitize parents, teachers, and pupils. The assumption was that sensitized parents would enhance the education of both their daughters and sons by providing a friendly and supportive learning environment at home. Further, sensitized teachers would work towards the eradication of gender bias in the delivery of instruction to both their female and male pupils. Unbiased treatment of pupils might enable girls to stay in school where it was hoped they would be able to acquire the life skills of critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, assertiveness, and communication.

Another assumption was that the assessment of the SCI in the selected schools would benefit program developers to improve the dissemination strategies as they continued to introduce the SCI to other schools in Malawi. The study of the SCI might also benefit the three other schools, who were also engaged in the SCI within the district.

1.6 Delimitations

This study had the following delimitations:

1. The study was delimited to two school communities located in Chikwawa district of Southern Malawi.
2. The study was delimited to the use of mixed methods in data collection, which involved the use of questionnaires, structured interviews, and class observation schedules.
3. The study was delimited to collecting data from girls and boys enrolled in standards 5- 7, teachers, parents, and some community leaders within the two selected school communities.

4. The study also collected the perceptions of the National Coordinator of the Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi (FAWEMA), who are the custodians of the SCI.

1.7 Limitations

This study had the following limitations:

1. Although the SCI was introduced to selected districts and schools nationally, it was not feasible to conduct the study in the two other regions because of the constraints of funding and time.
2. The results of the study did not present a national, regional or district reflection of the SCI. This study therefore has generalization limits. The study focused on two schools of Chikwawa District in Southern Malawi.
3. Another limitation was that the parents that I interviewed did not have skills in spoken English and reading. It was necessary for me to translate the focus group questions into Malawi's national language, Chichewa, a process which could result in the loss of some meanings.

1.8 Assumptions

In this study, the researcher made the following assumptions:

1. That although the two selected schools were both rural, they had different cultures because one was located in the remote rural area, while the other was located close to a main road and a flourishing trading centre.
2. That the mobility and the gender ratio of teachers within the schools affected the educational programmes.

3. That the participants would be free to express themselves in their responses because of the nature of Malawi's present political dispensation, which is democratic.
4. That my background as a Malawian citizen and educator might contribute to some strengths and biases to this study.
5. That students, parents, and teachers would respond openly and honestly since they had been exposed to other educational initiatives, such as GABLE, the Girl Child, and AIDS clubs.

1.9 Definition of Terms

In this document, a number of abbreviations, concepts, and terms are used in an attempt to ensure adequate information of the initiative under study. For the purpose of providing a reference for the readers, the following abbreviations, concepts, and terms are explained:

Table 1.1

Definition of Terms

Definition	Meaning
1. Capability	Nussbaum (2001) stated that capability refers to “ what people are actually able to do and to be” (p.1). Nussbaum further suggested that we need more than economic growth to determine what people are capable of doing and being. While there are many groups who might be deprived within societies, “women figure in the argument as people who are often unable to enjoy the fruits of a nation’s general prosperity” (p. 1). Individuals can be deprived of basic abilities as reflected by premature mortality, significant undernourishment (especially children), persistent morbidity, and widespread illiteracy, among others (Sen, 1999, p. 20).

2. Enrolled Nurse	Enrolled Nurses work with Registered Nurses to provide patients with basic nursing care. They are accomplished in practical skills of nursing but do not undertake more complex procedures. Enrolled Nurses work with people of all backgrounds and ages (Careers in health, 2007).
3. Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)	FAWE was founded in 1992 and organized as an international non-governmental organization in Nairobi, Kenya. FAWE'S organizing principles reflect the concept of the Gender Based Approach to Planning (GAP), framing educational decision-making through the telescope of the needs of girls and women (Miske & VanBelle-Prouty, 1997, p. 20).
4. Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi (FAWEMA)	FAWEMA is a Malawi chapter under FAWE. FAWEMA's activities concentrate on advocacy and support for girls' and women's education. They are the caretakers of the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) in Malawi.
5. Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy Education (GABLE)	GABLE is "a Government of Malawi programme supported by funds from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). GABLE'S main purpose is to draw more girls into primary school and keep them there until they complete the primary cycle" (Robb & Kaunda, 1998, p. 1).
6. Gender Appropriate Curriculum (GAC)	GAC was an initiative established at the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) in 1992. The GAC project was charged with the responsibility of incorporating gender sensitivity into the primary, teacher training, and in-service teacher curricula (Swainson, Bendera, Gordon, & Kadzamira, 1998, p. 18).
7. Gender-Based Approach to Planning (GAP)	GAP "argues for a strategic shift from the dominant econometric perspective to a gender-focussed pedagogical perspective" (Miske & VanBelle-Prouty, 1997, p. 7).
8. Gender	Gender is the "social construction of male/ female identity which is distinguished from sex, the biologically based distinction between men and women" (The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought, 1999, p. 353). Feminists have analyzed gender

	as a theory in the subordination of women, for example, associating them with natural activities like childbearing. The natural activities confine women as homemakers to the domestic space. The family is believed to be the important setting for instilling gender roles.
9. SCI	According to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund-Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Organization (UNICEF-ESARO), the SCI is an initiative designed to support the many interventions already in place to reduce the "push-out" rate of girls from school.
10. Special Gift	Special Gift, produced by UNICEF-ESARO, is one of the seven Sara episodes. The Special Gift is based on the issues of "girls' retention in school; rights to education and non-discrimination" (Russon, 2000, p. 2). In the comic book, Sara's uncle refers to the fuel stove as <i>The Special Gift</i> , while Sara's father refers to Sara, his daughter.
11. UNESCO	Refers to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.
12. Unfreedom	Sen (1999) referred to unfreedoms in terms of the sources of, for example, "poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or over activity of repressive states" (p. 3). Sen also suggested that the lack of freedoms "relates directly to economic poverty, which prevents people from satisfying hunger, or achieving sufficient nutrition, or obtaining remedies for treatable illnesses, or the opportunity to be adequately clothed or sheltered, or to enjoy sanitary facilities" (p. 4).
13. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund-Eastern & Southern Africa Regional Organization (UNICEF-ESARO)	UNICEF-ESARO are the producers of the SCI, <i>The Special Gift</i> . The comic book depicts the first series "on the adventures of Sara, an adolescent girl who gradually emerges as a role model for girls' empowerment in Africa" (UNICEF-ESARO, 1996, Intro. page).

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| 14. United Nations Children's
Emergency Fund (UNICEF) | UNICEF is currently involved in the following projects and activities in Malawi: <i>Keeping Kids in School Project</i> . Activity engaged in the construction and establishment of junior community primary schools for Standards One and Two. <i>Closing the Gender Gap Project</i> : Activities engaged in the training of paraprofessional teachers and provision of instruction materials (Swainson, Bendera, Gordon, & Kadzamira, 1998, p. 42). |
| 15. United States Agency for
International Development
(USAID) | USAID supports GABLE II at the primary sub-sector level (Swainson, Bendera, Gordon, & Kadzamira, 1998, pp.40-41). |
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1.10 Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter one presented the background of the problem, significance of the study, delimitations, limitations, assumptions, definition of terms, and the organization of the dissertation. Chapter two presents the literature review and the study conceptualization. Chapter three first highlights the research design, methodology, data collection and analysis techniques. Secondly, the chapter discusses the process of the research, while specifically examining triangulation, ethical issues, data analysis, and reliability, as well as validity of the instruments and findings. Chapter four presents data from the research findings. Finally, chapter five presents a synthesis of the findings, the conclusions, as well as discussion of the findings and the implications for theory, research, and practice.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been progress. In developing countries, the primary school enrolment for girls has increased by 50 per cent since 1960. In the poorest countries, it has more than doubled over the same period. Still 60 per cent of the girls that should be in school are not. It is clear that we need to do better, not just to improve the quantity of education, but also the quality. It does no one any good to have girls-or boys, for that matter-sit in classes that are over crowded, or where the education they receive has no relevance to their daily lives. The goal of education and girls' education in particular, is to allow women to take an even more active role in society-and to give them even more of a stake in their future. (USAID Administrator J. Brady Anderson-Symposium on Girls' Education, 2000, p. 50)

2.1 Introduction

For a long time most governments among the developing nations have emphasized the need for equality of access to education for their citizens. This emphasis has been crucial in ensuring that both male and female students have the opportunity to enrol in school. While an increase in the number of students is being achieved, it has been suggested that the quality of education has been jeopardized. Pigozzi (2000) claimed that access and quality need to be redefined. She explained that her organization, UNICEF, had already begun “to do so with its ‘rights-based approach,’ whose premise is that curricula must be relevant to students’ lives, founded on respect for human rights and gender equality, respect for diversity, and include life-skills training that can make a long term difference in girls’ lives” (pp. 19- 20). Pigozzi further

stated that when access to schools is universal, people begin to consider education as a human right. In an environment where access is open to everyone and quality is the goal, benefits will be reaped if agents understand the local context. This understanding should be used to create schools that are affordable and welcoming to both male and female students. Where leaders understand the context of learners, providers of the education services will ensure support for the learners and enable their successful completion of schooling (p. 50).

Firstly, this chapter begins by examining the background to gender equity in developing countries, as well as the socio-cultural, socio- political, and the socio-economic contexts. Secondly, I summarize studies that have been conducted to evaluate girls' education programmes in different developing countries. Thirdly, I present the conceptual framework based on Social Capital Theory and Sen's Capabilities Approach to Development. Sen's Capabilities Approach is adapted from Nussbaum's (2001), Robeyn's (2003), and UNICEF-Malawi's (n.d.) interpretations.

2. 2 Background to Gender Equity in Developing Countries

Malawian women and girls, like those in most developing countries and in most Sub-Saharan countries, face gender inequities at home, at school, and at work. Gender is defined as the “social construction of male/female identity, which is distinguished from SEX, the biologically based distinction between men and women. Gender is an integral part of the process of social classification and organization” (The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought, 1999, p. 353). Gender inequities or gaps imply “the discrepancy in opportunities, status, attitudes between men and women” (The Canadian Oxford Dictionary, 2001. p. 581).

The socialization of human beings begins the day we are born and continues throughout our lives. Gender socialization begins very early in life. Our home is our first socializing institution (Andersen, 1997, p. 37; Mackie, 1996, p. 4). The values that are instilled in us shape our view of the world. Gender inequality is a global phenomenon, which is experienced by women and girls in most countries of the world. Women within different societies experience gender inequality differently, even though the issues might be similar. Although the gender gap has narrowed considerably in the Western countries and the Caribbean, some women and girls in those countries still experience gender inequality. Pipher (1994) recorded that, “girls complain that they do more chores than their brothers. Or that they make less money baby-sitting than their brothers do mowing lawns. Or that parents praise brothers’ accomplishments more than theirs” (pp. 41-42). Gender socialization has impacted on the value society places on jobs depending on who does what (Wharton, 2005, pp. 174-176).

Writers on gender equity issues have recorded evidence to indicate that there are oppressive relations between females and males in Africa. Amin (1992) outlined the inequities that the women of Egypt have experienced over the years. Although at the time of writing, Amin reported a decrease in the power of men, she believed that there was still more to be done for the liberation of women. Among the ills that she highlighted were issues such as the following:

- Some men in Egypt have despised their wives and divorced them without reason;
- Some men eat alone at the table while the mother, sisters, and wife waited to eat after the men had left the table;

- Others appoint a male guardian for their wives so that they would monitor the women's movements;
- Other men imprison women in the house and boast about the confinement. The confinement would be lifted at the woman's death.
- Men have also despised women by excluding them from the public sphere of society and have denied them the expression of their ideas in business, politics, the arts, public affairs, and religious issues (p.10).

The seclusion of women from active participation does not benefit society. Seclusion increases the number of dependent people in the world, overworks men, without empowering the female population.

Women constitute a majority of the agricultural labour force in Africa, as well as the majority of informal labour force, while occupying the lowest positions in the formal sector as either semi-skilled or unskilled employees. At the household level, women perform most of the domestic or what is known as reproductive tasks, that is, child-bearing and rearing, food processing, care of the sick and human labour. Women are also essentially responsible for the production of most of the food which is consumed by the majority of households. Studies also indicate that while women carry a heavier load in production and reproduction, they do not enjoy similar rights in terms of access to resources, which include land credit, and they do not enjoy similar rights in decision-making processes (Meena, 1992, p. 2). The labour and oppressive gender relations stated above can be categorized as *socio-cultural*, *socio-economic*, and *socio-political* constraints to women's participation in society. These are elaborated in the next section.

2.3 The Context of Gender Inequity Issues in Developing Countries

Gender inequity exists within the context of socio-cultural, socio-economic, and socio-political arenas. Gender inequities vary within societies for the same reasons.

2.4 Socio- Cultural Context

Socio-cultural practices are not rigid. The impact of socio-cultural practices on gender equity can be considered at the family, educational setting, and race and class levels.

2.4.1 Family level

In most societies of the developing countries, daughters are socially and culturally valued less than sons. There are different expectations for girls and boys. Girls are sensitized from childhood to be interested in household activities, while boys are socialized to be outgoing and ambitious. In a typical Malawian family, “girls do not inherit family property and regardless of the matrilineal and patrilineal systems, males control both power and resources” (UNICEF-Malawi, n.d., p. vii). In the day-to-day life of the Malawian girl, she is taught to be submissive, to serve others, because it is emphasized that girls should marry, and if a girl wants to find a husband she has to behave. Older women will usually relate girls’ actions to the anticipated marriage of the girl. For example, if a girl sits on a mortar (a traditional implement for pounding maize) she is admonished and told she will not get married. If a girl does not do house work to the satisfaction of her mother or family, she is ridiculed with words such as “look at her, she will not find a husband” or “she will shame us, because she will not keep her marriage.” Girls are not brought up to believe what they can be on their own, but always in relation to men.

With reference to family property, girls are not considered because it is expected that their husbands will look after them. The family cannot take chances to give property to their daughter because another man will enjoy it. Parents assume that the husband is responsible for looking after their daughter. The fact that a man is responsible for the material needs of his wife is very well understood, so that even if the husband cannot afford to meet all the necessities of his wife, parents and siblings cannot easily intervene. In some cases where people have intervened, some husbands have concluded that they are being looked down upon, and have separated with their wives or divorced them. Although divorce is becoming common in Malawi, women are in most cases the victims. If a man decides to leave the wife no matter how much she has contributed towards the wealth, the man might not share the property fairly. If she has no paid employment, she might suffer greatly. Since males dominate the judicial system, it is usually difficult to have a woman's case heard. Some women cannot afford to find a lawyer because they have no money and sometimes because they are timid. Women often work hard in life and at the end of a marriage or at the death of their husbands, walk away with nothing (Brody, 1999, p. 6).

2.4.2 Educational setting

At the global level, most Western countries and the Caribbean have experienced excellent girls' enrolment and performance. In these countries, the gender gap is closing between the enrolment and performance of boys and girls. The gender gap needs to be narrowed in some African and some Asian countries (Bendera 1999 & Sibbons 1999). In Pakistan for instance, the gender gap exists due to the politics of gender, education, and development. Most girls do not go to school because they are attributed low cultural value compared to boys. Parents need girls at home to assist with the household duties.

When young women get an education, it is believed that the girl benefits the family into which she marries (Heward, 1999, p. 206).

There are many factors that impact upon women and girls' education. Apart from the home, institutions of learning have contributed to gender socializing. Teachers' attitudes as well as schoolbooks enhance the lack of democracy and gender sensitivity illustrated by parents in the home. Teachers' stereotyped attitudes are evidenced from statements, which indicate that girls have no brains for mathematics and science. Male teachers indicate that women are needed in society to ensure that families are well taken care of. In her comment on the negative reference that teachers portrayed about Mauritian girls, Bunwaree (1999) commented,

Many of the teachers expressed similar views. The availability of girls as a negative reference group often helped boys learn and practice the masculine identity through which each generation re-creates the patriarchal relations of adult society. Classroom interaction and learning materials, especially textbooks, reinforce gender differences. School textbooks are major instruments through which children learn about the social values and norms of the period in which they live. The sexism propagated at school becomes even more apparent when the text and illustrations in school textbooks are analyzed. (p. 146)

In an analysis of Chichewa literature texts, used at the Junior Secondary School level, Banda (1998) found that female characters were portrayed negatively. The negative attributes described women as not being trustworthy, not respecting confidentiality, having bandy legs, being bad cooks, and having unbearable body odour. In the same analysis, males were depicted as having power. The sources of power were their male characteristics such as assertiveness, their control over females, and their economic independence. Male characters dominated the female characters and were considered the heroes (p. 132). Most curricular texts in Malawi depict gender stereotyping as a reflection of societal norms. Women have been assigned a subordinate

role. Through the different intervention programmes, the Malawi government is attempting to address gender inequities in curricular materials.

2.4.3 Race, gender, and class

In situations where gender inequities occur within contexts characterized by race and class, the situation becomes more complex for women. As mentioned already, women in general have been subjected to second class status compared to men in most countries of the world. For example, Unterhalter (1999) studied the biographies of four black and two white South African women. Three women were of the older generation, and the other three women represented the younger generation. She narrated the women's experiences at home and at school. The women suffered injustices because of their gender and race. One black woman stated how her family farm of almost 100 years old was taken away from her family by the apartheid government, leaving them to struggle. Although the three older generation black women came from families that had considerable material wealth "in childhood and youth the benefits these women could derive from this wealth were circumscribed by gendered family politics" (p. 53). One of the older white women received mixed messages from her father. She was allowed to roam about the countryside freely with her brother, but when one day she fell from her brother's pony, she was blamed for behaving like a girl and never allowed to ride again. Unterhalter (1999) also recorded autobiographies of younger generation South African women. When asked to comment on their school experiences the younger black women stated, "Schooling, like childhood, is cruel. It is never uplifting but is recalled as brutalizing, a crushing of creativity, a harsh bodily regime" (p. 57). Some of the younger women remembered boarding school as harsh because of the lack of food, uncomfortable boarding facilities, controls in their movement beyond the schools'

perimeter, and the racism of their (generally) teachers. The teachers did not allow them to write the truth, and impressed on them that they were of a lower class. Some girls were assigned to do domestic work for the white teachers. One of the black students noted the teacher's assurance to them: 'You are born to work for us' (Ramphela, 1995, as cited in Unterhalter, 1999, p. 58).

Another young woman reflected on how school for her had no physical but rather an emotional dislocation. School had "no connection to the world of everyday racism or of resistance against that racism and the repression of that resistance. This was the world she lived in because of her parents' activism, but her school and teachers denied its reality" (p. 58).

Commenting on the liberation of the oppressed, Freire (1997) stated,

But while both humanization and dehumanization are real alternatives, only the first is the people's vocation. This vocation is constantly negated, yet it is affirmed by that very negation. It is thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression, and the violence of the oppressors; it is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice, and by their struggle to recover their lost humanity. (pp. 25-26)

Regardless of gender, education should empower individuals to improve their lives and most of all to have a voice that will contribute to making a difference in their lives and in society. When women experience gender inequities at home and school it is hard, but when they are discriminated by race, it is dehumanizing. Post apartheid South Africa is working towards healing the wounds, but it will take a long time. In the quest for a better life, education might be the vehicle for change (Freire, 1997, p. 9).

2.5 The Socio-political Context

At the socio-political level, women are faced with patriarchal structures within the family, the community and state levels. In the African setting, the indigenous models

of gender, polity, and the state are characterized by three models. First, is a *primary cultural model* that is corporate. In this model, individuals are part of many interdependent human relations, which include family and community. The corporate ideological model has been common to all African societies. The corporate model emphasized kinship and women had unique political opportunities. Women also experienced social strain between their household and public lives. The African States had no well-defined separation between kinship and politics although they had centralized political and military institutions (Mikell, 1997, pp. 10-11). Most States did not have highly stratified social community. Mikell (1997) further explained,

Africans derived political legitimacy from the supernatural power of the great “God” and the various deities who supported their political systems, as well as from the political checks and balances within these systems. If and when leaders became autocratic, people could exercise the ultimate sanction of withdrawing community consent, and they could desert the ruler. Much of the incentive for fairness and the ideology (rather than the practice) of egalitarianism came from the fact that family groups were the basic units of the community, and the right to political participation was derived from membership in these kin units. (p. 11)

In this setting, members who were from the high status clans, whether male or female, could participate in politics, although males had the greater advantage. Women who were not from the high status clans usually achieved equal status with men after their childbearing years were over. Grandmothers in Malawi might fit in this category.

The second model for societal, polity, and gender relations is that of *dual-sex* organization, which enabled women to participate in their capacity as members of occupational and ritual organizations, or as members of age groups, and sex-specific secret societies. Although women had the opportunity to participate at both the clan level and in other groups, the organizations benefited from the assistance by the established principles of the corporate ideal on one hand. On the other hand, they were

limited by the group consensus (Mikell, 1999, p. 11-12). In the dual-sex model, although women were involved in the political system, male dominance existed at all levels of society including the household and in the public sphere. The corporate and dual-sex structures created an outward appearance of equality by allowing women to contribute in public decision making, although indirectly. Women often spoke as group representatives as sisters, wives, market women, and crafts persons. If their interests were not represented, women were able in some situations to organize.

The third model, *the gender-bias compact*, emerged over time. This model revealed tensions between the state and potential female rulers, and the means by which the state tried to assume control over them and the political process. In both the patrilineal and matrilineal societies, history portrays women as “creators of states, supporters of wars and resisters of conquest, and officiates at rituals and events consolidating the power of the states in periods of crisis” (Mikell, 1997, p. 13). In some states, although royal women could pass on their leadership to their offspring, it was not always easy. Some women were accused of appointing their sons before the opportunity was offered to other families. Sometimes royal men jealously guarded the rights of rulership to ensure that the sister’s sons who were not destined to rule would not take advantage (Mikell, 1997, p. 13).

Although some matrilineal kingdoms still exist in Africa, the “gendered process” of the state continues to cause serious problems. “Political succession, however, appears to be the point at which attempts are made to manipulate and limit women’s political leadership roles” (Mikell, 1997, p. 14). Women in traditional African states faced challenges to dual leadership, as the states became more centralized. Regardless of whether the state was based on patrilineal or matrilineal societies, women were

considered a threat because of their reproductive and kinship capabilities. “The perceived threat to state sovereignty symbolized by female political leaders in traditional African states was heightened during the colonial period and persists even in modern African politics” (Mikell, 1997, p. 15). In Malawi, for example,

since the transition to liberal democracy in 1993-1994, the Malawi government has shown a willingness to preach gender equality by adopting a nondiscrimination clause in its constitution and undertaking legal reform and policy initiatives; however, the political will to act is not in evidence. Women have resisted the cultural opposition to their empowerment by utilizing their matrilineal role as kingmakers and adopting arguments consistent with traditional participatory decision-making processes to push for changes in their favor, albeit with little effect. (Semu, 1997, p. 77)

Although the picture looks grim for the majority of women in Malawi, there are situations where outside the formal political process, women in the matrilineal setting are taking advantage as kingmakers to influence the appointment of fellow women as female chiefs (Mhura, 1999, as cited in Semu, 2003, p. 92). Not all African societies share the three models of gender and policy relations outlined above. Islam, for example, has influenced some societies more than kinship components.

In terms of the perpetuation of gender inequalities in developing countries Waylen (1998) stated,

the actions of different groups of women cannot be understood outside of the structures which constrain them, just as those structures cannot be understood without some consideration of the impact of the choices made by the actors both inside and outside of them. (p. 2)

Although it might be assumed that women have equal human rights to men, in some societies or nations, there are barriers which women have to surmount in order to achieve their aspirations. Government structures in most countries are centralized and hierarchical, clustering women mostly at the bottom rung. Among the causes of gender inequities in developing countries is state gender. Women are discriminated in

employment opportunities, in areas such as scientific and technological careers. Women are still clustered around the lower segments of the labour market in low-paid, low-skilled and low-status jobs. Some jobs are characterized as being appropriate for women, such as clothing and electronics, and caring jobs. Females are allocated these jobs because it is assumed that women are characterized by

docility and dexterity; ability to withstand routine, sedentary activities; acceptance of lower pay because of their subordinate position in society and in the family. The few women who do succeed in reaching middle management positions in some sectors often experience a 'glass ceiling' preventing any further promotion. (Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, 1995, p. 35, as cited in Bunwaree, 1999)

Females are also often discriminated against based on the possibility of marrying and bearing children, because companies are not willing to pay for maternity leave. Some companies do not hire women in engineering positions because they believe that women cannot perform outdoor work, for example, climbing and scaffolding (Bunwaree, 1999, p.145).

2.6 The Socio-economic Context

Due to the inequities perpetuated through cultural traditions, women have lagged behind in the economic arena. Most women struggle in their day-to-day undertakings due to the politics within the family and other social institutions which do not consider the special needs of women. In his book, *Development as Freedom*, Sen (1999) stated,

If we turn now to economic activities, women's participation can also make a big difference. One reason for the relatively low participation in day-to-day economic affairs in many countries is a relative lack of access to economic resources. The ownership of land and capital in the developing countries has tended to be very heavily biased in favor of the male members of the family. It is typically much harder for a woman to start a business enterprise, even of a very modest size, given the lack of collateral resources. (pp. 200-201)

Women are discriminated against in the distribution of family resources. Given the opportunity, women have the potential to develop themselves as well as their families. This echoes the saying that, “when we educate a woman, we educate a nation.” Women, as a right, should have access to education and social services, such as adequate health services, information on reproductive health, adequate water supply, and access to small loans. The provision of social services is crucial to the economic development of women and society as a whole. Without good health, food, and housing facilities, societies might not be able to advance educationally, as well as economically. Where women have not advanced in school and cannot access beneficial employment, they need the support of other agencies to advance their lives (United Nations, 1995, pp. 71-71).

Most societies, which perpetuate patriarchal leadership, assume that women will benefit financially from the male members of their families. This philosophy is not viable because women have different status; some women might be single, others divorced, or widowed. Given such heterogeneity, even if the male members of a family are able to assist, what would happen to the dependent women if the male providers died or lost their job? Amin (1992) observed,

This dependency and other relevant factors cause an imbalance in family finances. An Egyptian man who earns a living for himself and his children discovers that a portion of his earnings goes to support some of his relatives, acquaintances, or others with whom he has little contact. His human contact compels him to give freely of his income in order to prevent their starvation. Although these women are able to work and earn a living, they perceive such a man to be fulfilling his obligations. The gap between men and women in this situation can be attributed to women’s deprived upbringing, which leaves them ignorant of their potentialities and abilities. (p. 14)

In addition to financial security, women need an education so that they can understand their world better. Since the world is a global village, they need to understand it beyond the borders of our countries and continents. Women can understand their world better

through literacy, which would enable them to read about their country and others beyond the borders of their countries. If women understand the world they live in, they can interact through it to better their lives, as well as that of their families.

The constraints to women's participation in society occur because at the crucial developmental stage of puberty and adolescence, most girls are denied the right to access an education. Girls when they enroll in school tend to drop-out due to many challenges that they experience. In the developing world constraints to schooling can range from cultural practices, negative attitudes towards educating girls, poverty, unfriendly school climate, long distances to schools, and to the lack of female role models (Colcough, Rose, & Tembon, 1998; Robb & Kaunda, 1998; Rose & Tembon, 1995). When girls do not enroll in school or drop-out before completing their studies, the result is that they lack the skills that would enable them to contribute to development. Girls who drop out of school usually marry prematurely. Some premature marriages result in early pregnancies, which can cause physical complications that might lead to chronic poor health or death. In an attempt to understand the context of the learners, especially girls in developing countries, researchers such as the Female Education in Mathematics and Science in Africa (FEMSA, 1997) and the Girls Attainment in Basic Literacy (GABLE, 1998) have conducted studies to determine the causes of low enrolment, persistence, and achievement in education. Such studies assist governments, donors, and other interested organizations to develop policies that improve the status of girls' education.

2.7 Studies in Developing Countries Related to Girls' Education

This section reviews six studies of interventions and programmes for girls' education.

2.7.1 The Sara Communication Initiative (SCI)

The overall goal of the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) is to “promote the Rights of the Child and support their implementation and realization, with special focus on adolescent female children in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESAR)” (UNICEF, 2001, p. 3). The SCI is a regional project developed to “support and reinforce on-going and future programs supported by UNICEF, its partners and any organizations with similar goals. . . . The focus of the Sara remains the survival, protection, development and participation rights of the child” (UNICEF, 2001, pp. 2-3). UNICEF (2001) carried out a review of the SCI to find out if the Eastern and Southern African countries could relate to Sara as the entertaining symbol for the adolescent girl. Other issues that they evaluated included whether the themes of the episode were credible and whether the characters used in the episode were acceptable in all cultures (pp. 37-38). The first phase of the evaluation included the review of the impact of the communication tools such as video, comic book, poster, and radio programmes 1 and 2. The main findings of the study were organized according to each communication medium such as the story presented on video. One comment with reference to the video indicated that the video story was realistic and related to the daily lives of the people (UNICEF, 2001, p. 36).

The second phase of the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) research was the mid- term evaluation. Russon (2000) conducted a study of the implementation of the SCI in Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and South Africa. This study

highlighted both the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation process, thereby enabling the regional and country teams to revisit their implementation strategies. One of the findings was that, “contextual factors play an important part in the implementation of the SCI” (UNICEF, 2001, p. 47). Hence I too will incorporate the aspect of context in my study. In the countries where governments were decentralizing power to the district level, the SCI was able to move through the district planning processes.

Although my proposed study is focused on the SCI, it will contribute to the evaluation of the SCI differently. As noted in the UNICEF study, contextual factors matter because although Malawi is an African country, the people are located in unique contexts economically, socially, politically, culturally, and religiously. Such a situation, I believe will enable me to capture the unique aspects of Malawians within the selected school communities and how they interpret the SCI. Such findings will contribute to the theory of gender and the rights-based approach to education. As well, in my case, the SCI was used as a vehicle to determine if social capital and the human capabilities framework is applicable to examine gender issues in Malawi.

2.7.2 Gender and Education in Mozambique (GEM)

GEM evaluation was carried out in Mozambique in the year 2001. It was sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF). The GEM project “grew out of a previous Girls’ Education Project (GEP), also implemented through UNICEF and supported by CIDA” (Bernard & Cabral, 2001, p. 17). GEM’s focus was to move beyond access of girls into schools to recognition of gender “within the more holistic concepts of equity, inclusion, and quality” (p. 17). The purpose of the GEM evaluation was to assess if the intervention had promoted gender equity in basic education.

Specifically, the study aimed at identifying the impact of GEM on knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and policies in the education system, in communities, families, and schools (p. 18).

A four-member team with expertise in basic education, and gender knowledge and sensitivity conducted the evaluation of the intervention. The evaluators collected data by reviewing documents, and conducting individual and group interviews. The team interviewed Ministry of Education Officers, related agencies, donors, Provincial Education Officers, District Education Officers, teachers, directors, students, parents, and community leaders. The results of the evaluation indicated that GEM “helped to remove –or at least began to reduce a number of barriers to inclusive education for vulnerable children” (Bernard & Cabral, 2001, p. 20). Some parents felt that their eyes were opened to the need for their daughters to pursue education. Another finding revealed that girls in the school communities visited continued to marry early and get pregnant out of wedlock. Parents also indicated that boys and girls were not enthusiastic about school because there was lack of employment opportunities in the rural communities (p. 24).

2.7.3 How Educating A Girl Changes the Woman She Becomes

This study was conducted by the Academy for Educational Development and Creative Associates International, Inc (1997) and was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The purpose of this study was to investigate “what changes when a girl receives an education that leads her to become a woman who has fewer, healthier, and better educated children. The emphasis is on the process of how education can have an impact” (Wolf & Odonkor, 1997, p. 1). The authors asserted that “a better understanding of what it is about education that changes

girls can guide decisions about the type of education to offer and strategies for overcoming barriers to access and achievement” (p.1). The study was carried out in Northern Ghana among the Dagomba people and was a replication of one that was previously conducted in India. The inquiry was multi-generational and engaged a selected family in order to understand how education had an impact on the women over time. The sample comprised 150 married adults who had a child, or adults who were over 20 years old. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews (Wolf & Odonkor, p. 2).

The family relationships were traced using the Family Tree Software (Wolf & Odonkor, p. 3). Data coding was used and information recorded on the interview guide according to the variables. Coded material was entered into a Systat database, which made it available for quantitative analysis (p. 3).

The findings of this study revealed first, that among the Dagomba, the age of marriage might not be influenced by education because the average marriage age was 18.9 years. Education did influence the type of marriage a woman experienced. For instance, a woman would attain position of first wife if she was educated and therefore would be assured more decision- making power within the immediate family. Second, what women benefited from education was greater confidence and skills to negotiate decisions in female domains, such as fertility, care of children and the education of children. Finally, researchers in this study suggested that empowerment and increased decision-making power can create social change if individuals have access to information. They also reported that what the Dagomba women learned in school when they were girls had an impact on the health and education of their children (Wolf & Odonkor, 1997, p. 69).

2.7.4 Factors that Negatively Affect Girls' Education in Malawi

The Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT) carried out the above study in December of 2000 in Malawi, Africa, at the request of United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). The goal of the study was to determine which factors impact on the education of girls at home, school, and in the classrooms of selected districts in Malawi (Chimombo et al., 2000, p. 1). The research was funded by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and assessed four districts that were operating UNICEF funded projects. The main objective of the study was to shed light on the problems that girls experienced as they pursued their education in Malawi. Data were collected using participatory learning and action, focus group discussion, participant observation, and interviews. The instruments that were used included household questionnaires, school information questionnaires, focus group discussions, classroom observation schedules, seasonal calendar, problem preference ranking, problem solution matrix, life histories, and home observation schedules (Chimombo et al., p. 2).

Major observations at the home front were that girls in some schools commence schooling at a much later age; early marriages continue to be a constraint to girls education; parents' tend to favour boys' education; and there was unequal division of labour between sons and daughters (Chimombo, et al., p. 4). At the school level, the researchers found that there were more classes than classrooms; harsh weather disturbed the smooth running of schools; school sites were not desirable; some schools had no water source nearby; some schools lacked adequate toilet facilities; and, most schools lacked female role models for girls. Female teachers were concentrated in infant classes. Results from the classroom analysis indicated that girls in most classes assumed a

subordinate status; there was limited teacher- pupil interaction; lessons were dull and monotonous; and more boys participated during lessons. These findings concurred with those by Miske and VanBelle-Prouty (1997) who referred to classrooms that favoured boys more than girls as “environments of discouragement” (pp. 2-3). While the issues listed above are critical for effective schooling, the researchers pointed out that absolute poverty was the greatest problem. Girls did not persist in school because they had to assist parents as they struggled to survive (Chimombo et al., 2000, pp. 4-6).

2.7.5 Girls Education Monitoring System (GEMS)

The fourth study, entitled Girls Education Monitoring System (GEMS), was a performance review undertaken by Juarez and Associates Inc. (2000) in the countries of Guatemala, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, and Peru. The performance review was carried out in countries that were participating in the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade/ Office of Women in Development (EGAT/WID)-funded Girls’ and Women’s Education Activity (GWEA). The activity included “long term support for building constituencies that supported increased enrolment, retention, and completion of female primary school student . . . and developing classroom techniques for teachers to be used in encouraging girls’ participation in the classroom” (Escalona, 2002, p. vii). The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) sponsored the evaluation. The evaluators based the review on the analysis of project documents, manipulation of the available national education statistics for the five countries, and fieldwork.

The data collection focused on measuring the indicators of the Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade/ Office of Women in Development (EGAT/ WID) strategic framework.

At the strategic objective level, ‘Improved Girls Education’ was measured by examining trends in gross enrolment ratios and completion rates over the life of the project in each country. At the intermediate result level, the mobilization of constituencies to promote girls’ education was determined by examining trends in the number and type of organizations initiating actions to promote girls’ persistence in schools, as well as non-USAID resources generated by these organizations for investment in actions. (Escalona, 2002, p. viii)

The principal results of the evaluation at the *strategic objective level* indicated that there had been greater annual increases in female gross enrolment ratios during the years of the Women in Development (WID) programme than in previous years in Guatemala, Guinea, and Morocco. There was reduction of the gap in national enrolment ratios favouring boys by 3%, 8%, and 8% respectively in the three countries. It was also found that there were low rural female completion rates in all countries. At the intermediate level, social awareness efforts were generally the principal type of action engaged in by the organizations. The percentage of participation in the social awareness efforts by civil society in the countries involved was Guatemala (38%), Peru (63%), and Guinea (59%) (Escalona, 2002, p. ix).

2.7.6 Parents’ and Community Attitudes towards Girls’ Participation

This research was carried out to determine parents’ and community attitudes towards girls’ participation in and access to education and science, mathematics, and technology (SMT) subjects. The SMT is a Female Education in Mathematics and Science in Africa (FEMSA) project aimed at improving the participation and performance of girls in SMT. The research was a pilot phase of the project conducted in the countries of Cameroon, Ghana, Tanzania, and Uganda by country teams from 1995 to 1997. The objective of the study was to compile country profiles for the two years of phase one of the SMT using a “partnership of students, teachers, and parents to explore the problems girls face in the SMT subjects” (O’Connor, 1997, p. 1).

Data for this study were collected using open-ended questionnaires for students and teachers, special questionnaires for heads of schools, guided discussions with students, teachers, and parents using participatory learning action (PLA) methodology. PLA involved intensive brain storming, separate gendered groups, and later, mixed groups. Researchers also utilized desk reviews and interviews, which enabled the researchers to determine past and current research conducted in the area of gender and SMT. The process enabled them to document the interventions, which had been set in place to improve the participation and performance of girls in SMT subjects. The main findings of the study were that low enrolment and high dropout rates of girls were due to the negative attitude that parents had towards educating girls. Specifically, some parents indicated that they were reluctant to send their daughters to school because of the corrupting influences of male teachers and male students who interacted with the girls. Some parents further indicated that educating girls was a waste of money because when they marry, they will benefit the families they marry into (Hari, 1997, pp. 2-4).

2.8 Social Capital

This section will focus on women as social capital. Most of the issues that impact girls' education relate to the social climate in which they live: home, school, and community. Education is crucial to the development of any society or nation. In order to ensure sustainable development in developing countries, there is need to address the issues that prevent girls, who later become women, from enhancing their education. Bridger and Luloff (2004) suggest that sustainable development is possible when there are sustainable communities. They further note that sustainable communities are maintained by social interaction.

Without a vibrant community field to provide communicative linkages that generate social capital and highlight common ground between opposing groups, it is doubtful that any community can achieve the level of trust required to grapple meaningfully with the difficult issues surrounding sustainability. (p. 16)

In the case of girls' education, it is evident that the communities in most developing countries are sometimes disconnected from individuals, especially children and girls. The above quote leads us to ask the crucial question: What is social capital? In addition, we need to understand the characteristics of social capital, and how social capital might enhance education in general and girls' education in particular.

2.8.1 Definition of Social Capital

Social capital, which “refers to connections among individuals-social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam, 2000, p. 19). Trust and reciprocity between people assists them to engage in collective action. Coleman (1988) defined social capital by its function.

It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: They all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors--whether persons or corporate actors-- within the structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible. (p. S98)

Coleman (1988) connected social capital to social structures such as the family. He explained how children's education is influenced by their parent's human capital, which refers to acquired skills, knowledge, information, and creativity of individuals. (NEF, 2002, p.7). Human capital relates to social capital because the skills, knowledge, information, and creativity that individuals might acquire enables them to network with people of similar capital to access their needs. For instance, if individuals are aspiring for better jobs and they possess the skills, they will need information about possible organizations where jobs might be available, as well as names of people who might be

affiliated with the particular organization. The job seekers will be networking with individuals who might be influential in recommending them to the employers in the particular field. Human capital is enhanced by economic capital and after its acquisition an individual is able to secure gainful employment or venture into any endeavours of choice. Coleman believed that the family is the underlying foundation of social capital. Through parental human capital, children's social capital is nurtured and developed. He further pointed out that parents develop their children's social capital when they invest in healthy relationships within the family as well as outside (p. S110).

2.8.2 Characteristics of Social Capital

The characteristics of social capital are that it has both a *private* aspect and a *public* face. The private aspect refers to the benefits of the connections we make personally, such as getting a job, "for most of us get our jobs because of whom we know- that is our social capital." (Putnam, 2000, p. 20). The public face of social capital affects the wider community. Sometimes social capital can provide what a group needs, for instance, a sense of belonging, and yet cause damage to the wider community, for example, urban gangs, bombings, and power elites (Putnam, 2000, p. 20). As well, social capital, as money can be used up and be gone. Some communities can have more capital than others. People's social capital can increase with increased levels of education, age, occupational position, and gender. With regards to gender, traditionally, men have benefited economically from formal networks because they have been allowed to work outside the home and connect with experts in the public arena. Women on the other hand might not benefit economically through their informal social networks. Although such informal networks are beneficial for the sharing of resources and reducing risks, the drawback is that women are locked out of information that may help them survive. (The

World Bank Group, 2006, p. 1-2). In a school setting, teachers can have more social capital with regards to their students, but not in other situations such as when parents cannot trust them for fear that they might sexually molest their daughters.

Although social capital is common to all cultures, different researchers, theorists, and development experts analyze it in different ways. Khrishna and Uphoff (2002) propose two main categories of social capital, namely *structural* and *cognitive*.

Both pertain to and affect social relationships and interactions among people, and both affect and are affected by expectations. Structural social capital *facilitates* mutually beneficial collective action through established roles and social networks supplemented by rules, procedures, and precedents. Cognitive social capital, which includes shared norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs, predisposes people toward mutually beneficial collective action. (p. 87)

Although the two types of social capital are different, they are complementary. Cognitive capital is subjective, internal, deals with how people think and feel, and hence is difficult to change. Cognitive forms of social capital include norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs. Structural capital is objective, external, can be observed and modified. Examples of structural forms of capital include roles, social networks, rules, procedures and precedents. Both types of capital require investment of time and effort in order to be realized (Khrishna & Uphoff, 2002, p. 88). Although there are negative consequences of social capital, as mentioned earlier, there are many positive sides to it. Among the benefits of social capital are mutual support, co-operation, trust, and institutional effectiveness (Putnam, 2000, p. 22).

2.8.2.1 Knowledge and trust.

Healy (2003) defined trust as “a belief in the good intentions of others or their capacity to deliver on their promises and intentions-- is a product of mutual obligations” (p. 4). In such contexts, people depend on each other for services, exchange of goods

and other benefits. According to Rahn and Transue (2003, as cited in Baum & Ziersch), trust was defined as “a standing decision to give most people-- even those whom one does not know from direct experience-- the benefit of the doubt” (p. 545). The initial desire for individuals to act together enables them to learn each other’s values and in the process build trust.

2.8.2.2 Social interaction.

Social interaction is associated with social capital. This aspect of social capital enables individuals to meet face-to-face, to deepen their knowledge of each other, and to share common experiences which deepen understanding of each other (NEF, 2002, p. 5). As well, when people interact, they bring to the group a sense of who they are, where they belong, and the norms of behaviour they believe to be acceptable. The rules of behaviour in the group are usually informal and people adopt them through frequent socializing (Healy, 2003, p. 9). To further explain social interaction, Smith (2001) stated,

Interaction enables people to build communities, to commit themselves to each other, and to knit the social fabric. A sense of belonging and the concrete experience of social networks (and the relationships of trust and tolerance that can be involved) can, it is argued, bring great benefits to people. (p. 6)

While there are positive aspects to social interaction some theorists point out the negative aspects. Fukuyama (1999) pointed out the disadvantage of interacting with the in-group, while being hostile to the out-group. Such practices limit the ability for the members to gain from the outside members (pp. 2-3).

2.8.2.3 Shared values

As Khrishna and Uphoff (2002) pointed out, shared values fall within the category of cognitive forms of social capital because they deal with how people think

and feel. They include norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs (p. 87). According to NEF (2002), group members share values with individuals of like mind, as well as those who hold similar beliefs and objectives. Such characteristics enable people to bond into a particular community (p. 5). Although shared values might seem positive there is a downside to it. People who share similar values might have the tendency to exclude outsiders who might benefit the group. An example is people who immigrate to foreign lands and want to learn new languages and culture. If they do not mix with the dominant culture they might not benefit from new knowledge and skills. Sometimes shared values in the form of cultural traditions can stifle individual growth and creativity. Members and their families who do not comply with norms can be ridiculed or ousted from the community (The World Bank Group, 2006, p. 2).

2.8.2.4 Sustainable communities

In order for communities to be sustainable, they need people, organizations, resources, and relationships. A community which has sustainability potential has people who are open to new ideas, value education and understand the economic impact of social issues. Such communities mobilize community members to take part in leadership roles and achieve common goals. Organizations in a sustainable community work together to ensure social and economic development and do so in the interest of the community. Such organizations resolve conflicts and encourage active participation in their activities. Flora (1994) stated,

Sustainable communities are those that maintain and improve their social, economic, and environmental characteristics so that residents can continue to lead healthy, productive, and enjoyable lives. Sustainable development in these communities is based on the understanding that a healthy environment and a healthy economy are both necessary for a healthy society. (Flora, 1994, p. 29)

Resources also play an important role in assisting sustainable communities achieve their goals. Sustainable communities “look for appropriate external resources to achieve their goals. They take steps to reduce their dependency on external factors and spend their money with a long-term view to the future of the community” (p. 29). Finally, sustainable communities value the contributions of all parts of the community. When communities have high levels of participation in decision-making, their long-term goals are more achievable, resulting in greater ownership of the problems and solutions (p. 29).

2.9 Social Capital in the African Context

In the African context, social capital concerns address basic needs. Social capital is important in most developing countries, and especially in sub-Saharan Africa, because much of the economic activity has no fixed money value. People depend on extended family ties (Rose, 1997, p. 1). Since the economic context of Africa is different from that of the industrialized countries, Rose (1997) proposes a slightly different definition of social capital. “Social capital consists of informal social networks and formal organizations used by individuals and households to produce goods and services for their own consumption, exchange or sale” (p. 2). Social capital in Africa is about relationships, informal social networks, and tangible goods and basic services.

In a study of female social networks in Southern Nigeria from 1900 through 1960, McIntosh (2001) reported that Yoruba and Igbo women were active traders. “Standards of appropriate female behavior in both Yoruba and Igbo cultures reinforced systems of group interaction and hence the production of social capital” (p. 146). At this point in time, women were expected to share and not accumulate their wealth. Accumulation of wealth was considered selfish. It was reported that both men and

women maintained close ties with others so that they could receive advice and assistance from them whenever needed. People who minded their own business were considered selfish.

The situation in Africa has not changed much from what it was in the early twentieth century. In my home country of Malawi, social capital is a means of survival at the family, community, school, and national levels. Since most people might not have the financial resources to pay for services, they depend on the sympathy of extended family members, fellow church members, work mates, and neighbours. Networking is more visible during sicknesses, funerals, weddings, and other calamities. As a result of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) crisis in Africa, women are utilizing social networks by establishing homes for orphans within their communities, and mobilizing financial and human resources to maintain children's lives.

Unfortunately, social capital can be a limited commodity. It cannot solve all the problems of development. Social capital density differs within countries, institutions, and organizations.

This is simply to say that social capital-- like natural, physical, and human capital . . . has limited value if not combined with other forms of capital. One important attribute of social capital is that it can make the other types of capital and their productive combination more efficient. (Grootaert, 2001, p. 15)

Indeed, a combination of other types of capital can enhance the productivity of social capital of individuals. While some individuals might be able to access social capital, it might not be so for the chronically poor citizens. Cleaver (2002) reported,

The dependence of the very poor people on their own able-bodiedness and their inability to sustain this is the first constraining factor. Secondly they experience little room for manoeuvre in the family and wider social relationships, due to derogatory perceptions of the poor and associations with witchcraft, small families and often fragile family ties and unstable marital arrangements. Finally the poor are constrained by their inability to articulate successfully in public

sometimes literally because they do not speak the right language, more often because they feel they ‘don’t have the words’ to challenge discriminatory norms, or to present their own interests clearly. (p. 4)

Commenting on the changing social dynamics with respect to care Dixon-Fyle, (2002) explained how the social structure of Africa’s institutions were changing. With the lessening of other types of capital, social capital is being impacted. In Africa today, there is less bonding within extended families, clans, or villages. The sense of belonging, which individuals enjoyed, is fading. The social capital that bonded people is disappearing due to changes in social structure. Some changes in social structure can be attributed indirectly to colonialism, ethnic violence, migration, disrupted families due to HIV/AIDS, and new socio-economic arrangements (Dixon-Fyle, p. 6). As human capital and physical capital lessen or disappear, people will need to look at alternatives to the existing social arrangements in order to survive. While it is necessary to develop social capital, individual capabilities are crucial in ensuring personal survival and the ability to relate to others. Sen’s capabilities approach provides a theoretical basis for individual growth.

2.10 Sen’s Capability Approach

Sen’s approach does not provide a recipe for individuals to use. “The capability approach, strictly speaking, only advocates that the evaluative space should be that of capabilities. However, it does not stipulate which capabilities should be taken into account, or how different capabilities should be aggregated in an overall assessment” (Robeyns, 2003, p. 6). Although Sen is an economist, the issues that he articulates relate to social injustice and how it impacts on human development.

I have adopted the capability approach because, although Sen does not provide a recipe for resolving gender inequalities for each nation or society, he identifies crucial issues. These issues are necessary for human development and well being. Sen is among the development critics who believes that currently adopted practices attempting to solve Third World development problems should be replaced. “The single-minded focus on GNP and free markets must be replaced by a similarly unyielding concern for local cultures, ecology, and social issues such as health and education” (Kapur, 1999, p. 3). Sen suggested that the development paradigm should take into consideration issues of democracy, culture, human rights, gender rights, education, and health care. These social areas provide the environment necessary to the development of individual capabilities.

Sen (1999) was concerned with all the areas of human experience. While he acknowledged the importance of material wealth as necessary for significant development, Sen was also aware that if people could exercise their basic freedoms, they would be able to lead satisfactory lives. Sen referred to freedom as the capabilities of individuals. The basis of the concept of freedom as capabilities was that people who, for example, experienced hunger, illiteracy, homelessness or illness could not be free. When governments spent on education, health, and hunger, they were building the foundations that would enable people to develop capabilities, which foster economic development, hence economic freedom and thereby increased income (p. 39).

In Sen’s (1999), *Development as Freedom*, a new general theory of development economics suggested that there was need for more grassroots participation. The new approach included an index, which was broader than the one used by the World Bank to rank economic development. In the new approach, a country might rank first in terms of GNP, but because it did not perform well on the social and cultural dimensions, such as

provision of health care facilities and education, it might rank lower (Kapur, 1999, p. 6). In an interview with Kapur (1999), Sen stated, “But I am interested in poverty, I am interested in women’s deprivation; I am interested in child welfare and child mortality. I am interested in the battering of lives of young women who are constantly bearing and rearing children” (p. 8). Sen advocated for women’s literacy and empowerment because it directly impacted their freedom to make choices in life, such as the number of children they could comfortably raise. Education might also enable women to ensure proper feeding and health care, which would reduce child mortality.

This observation reflected the findings of the study that was conducted among the Dagomba of Northern Ghana, which I referred to earlier (Wolf & Odonkor, 1997, p. 69). They reported that the education of women increased their empowerment and decision-making power, enabling them to positively impact the health and education of their children (p. 69).

2.10.1 Physical Capability

The term physical capability focuses on people’s nutrition status, reproductive health, and bodily safety. Women’s problems that relate to deprivation of physical capabilities can be associated with *high death rates due to poor nutrition, poor reproductive health, and domestic violence against women*. Women and girls who experience poor nutrition, poor reproductive health, and violence lack bodily health and body integrity. Poor nutrition contributes to women’s poor bodily health. Although both men and women require adequate nutrition in order to maintain healthy bodies, women and girls have more nutritional needs than men, due to their reproductive function. Women in developing societies experience inequities in the way food resources are distributed among members of the family. Although women and children have greater

nutritional needs, they are usually considered last in the distribution of food at the family level (Amin, 1992 p.10). In households where the breadwinner is a man, it is considered respectful to let the male members of the family have a greater share of the food or to eat first. Sometimes boys are favoured over girls in terms of food distribution (Sen, 1999, p. 88-89). In the process, women and girls are denied their nutritional needs. The result of malnutrition for women during the reproductive stage is persistent body ailments and body weakness. Also birthing children with low birth weight who are less likely to survive childhood.

Another aspect of physical deprivation relates to *domestic violence*. FAWA (1996) reported that the issues that are considered violent to women “include sexual harassment in educational institutions; lack of access to legal information, aid or protection; degrading media images; and inadequate efforts on the part of public authorities to promote awareness of and to enforce existing laws” (p. 10). Sexual violence, whether it is evident through harassment or rape, is detrimental to females’ well being because they lose their body integrity. The abused women and girls are traumatized throughout their lives. The symptoms for the trauma might be shame, depression, and lack of self-esteem. Women who have experienced sexual violence can not move freely from place to place or engage in social activities because of the fear of assault and violence (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 13). As a result of the low status already assigned them by society for being female, the situation can be degrading. Most developing countries that have adopted democratic governments have endorsed laws in favour of women, but do not enforce the laws adequately.

2.10.2 Social Capability

Social capability refers to the freedom for an individual to engage in different forms of social interactions and associations without harassment (Nussbaum, 2001). Denial of the freedom for women to associate in some countries is maintained by patriarchal relations, which are characterized by power, subordination, and dependency. In most developing societies of the world, the ideal woman is conceptualized as powerless, subordinate, and dependent (Fox, 1999, pp. 36-37). Some of the socio-cultural issues which females experience deny them the development of social capabilities such as *social networks*, *social support*, and *autonomy*. “The social networks dimension relates to the number of people in one’s network, the frequency of contacts, group membership, and so forth. The social support dimension focuses on the type and amount of support that one receives” (Robeyns, 2003, p. 30). In most societies of the world, women mostly network with fellow women within the informal setting. Since most women engage in domestic work and unpaid care, they have little chance of communicating with people in the public arenas such as the political, economic, and legal.

2.10.3 Economic Capability

Economic capability refers to the ability of an individual to acquire income. In some societies, female members of society are economically deprived because there is a difference between women’s and men’s access to exert power over economic structures (FAWE, 1996, p. 12). On a similar note, Cleaver reported on the experiences of one young woman:

This young woman, the second wife of a wealthy Sangu farmer and businessman, complained of being beaten and overworked by her husband. Despite their agricultural success and income from their kiosk in the village, she

claimed to be living in poverty. She believed a miscarried pregnancy was caused by her husband working her too hard in the fields. (p. 14)

The financial dependence of women on men is usually unfortunate because men who have too much authority can sometimes misuse it. If the young woman had her own financial resources, she might have had a choice whether to leave the abusive marriage or to stay. She was trapped in this situation.

Within developing countries, most women are deprived access to land, and therefore, the opportunity to generate their own income. In most patriarchal societies, land is an asset passed on from father to son. Women have access to land through their marital status. For example, when the husband dies, the surviving relatives agree to drive the woman back to her home (Pepall, 2001, p. 3). Women, who might be widows and have no adult male family members to protect them, might be denied their land rights due to their gender. The deprivation of women to their land rights makes their expected role as food providers difficult. In addition, women's capability to generate income from the excess garden produce is denied.

2.10.4 Mental Capability

Mental capabilities refer to the ability to cultivate human traits of imagination, senses, and thought, through adequate education that equips the individual with literacy skills and scientific training (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 13). Nussbaum refers to the ability of an individual to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression. Education empowers individuals by enabling them to participate in economic, social, and political arenas of society. The deprivation of mental capabilities might be one of the causes of economic dependence of most women in later life.

Deprivation of mental capabilities can be evidenced at different levels of social institutions, such as the home, school, work place, and community at large.

2.10.5 Political Capability

Political capabilities relate to the ability of individuals to exercise their political freedoms. The Arab Human Development Report (2002) suggested that in most countries of the world, women are marginalized in political participation (p. 108). The political deprivation that women experience can be associated with the other deprivations, which were outlined earlier in the framework. For example, the lack of opportunity to participate in politics at different levels of society might be the result of biased distribution of economic resources, which favours male members of the family in most developing countries. Such a situation can result in a lack of resources for females to pursue education. When individuals lack literacy skills, they might not develop the necessary capabilities which will enable them to exercise their political freedoms. In his analysis, Sen (1999) examined political freedom as an instrumental freedom.

Political freedoms, broadly conceived refer to the opportunities that people have to determine who should govern and on what principles, and also include the possibility to scrutinize and criticize authorities, to have freedom of political expression and uncensored press, to enjoy the freedom to choose between different political parties and so on. (p. 38)

Although some developing countries have instituted democracy as their mode of governance, there continue to be barriers for citizens, and women, in particular. There are a higher percentage of men who are in politics compared to women. The Arab Human Development Report (2002) reported,

According to UNDP (HDR, 2000) women occupy 3.5 per cent of all seats in parliaments of Arab countries compared to 4.2 per cent in East Asia (excluding China), 11.0 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa, 12.7 per cent in South East Asia and the Pacific, 12.9 per cent in Latin American and Caribbean countries and 21.2 per cent in East Asia (including China). (p. 108)

Although the percentage for Sub-Saharan Africa is higher than that of Arab countries, there is need for more to be done to ensure gender equality in governance positions. In Malawi, for example, the present cabinet is comprised of 21 ministers, three of whom are women (AllAfrica, 2004, pp. 3-5). This is the case despite the fact that a little over half of Malawi's population is female. Most women in Malawi do not engage in politics because of cultural traditions which maintain that a woman's place is in the kitchen. Female Malawians are stereotyped as preferring to be at home, raising families.

2.10.6 Care Capability

Caring “involves raising children and taking care of other dependents, especially the elderly, and it is highly gendered: women do more non-market care for children as well as for the frail, elderly, and the sick” (Robeyns, 2003, p. 32). A question that might be asked is how non-paid care work affects individuals. Depending on the arrangements that might be made within the household, one might indicate that caring for others is laborious, while someone might indicate that it is enjoyable.

Dixon-Fyle (2002) suggested that in the African context there is need for more skills in the area of care because the challenges of care have increased over the years. “Already institutions such as the family, the state or marriage have broken down; new values have taken precedence. Competition is now more valued than cooperation, and many people subscribe to advancing individual interests to the exclusion of other considerations” (p. 2). Dixon-Fyle also suggested that with challenges such as AIDS or environmental issues, societies and governments should develop solutions through effective policies that will ensure that the care-giver and the cared-for are given adequate support. The provision of basic requirements in families, and all social institutions,

might ensure caring communities. The issue of the care of AIDS patients is one that needs to be addressed seriously. Because the illness takes a long time, it is necessary to advocate for facilities that can promote women's capacity to care. Indeed we also need to advocate men's capacity to care. The examination of social capital and capabilities has implications for policy development for educational institutions.

2.11 Implications for Policy Development

Research studies conducted to determine the impact of social capital on students suggest that social capital has a positive effect on student persistence and achievement in education. Communities with high civic engagement reported higher levels of parental support and lower levels of students' bad behaviour, such as physical violence, absenteeism without explanation, bringing weapons to school, and lack of interest about education (Putnam, 2000, p. 301). "Parents in states with high levels of social capital are more engaged with their kid's education, and students in states with high levels of social capital are more likely than students in less civic states to hit the books rather than to hit one another" (p. 302). The link between the school and the parents or guardians assures the students that parents care and are attentive to what a child is doing. The lines of communication are crucial to the survival of students. Although not specifically addressing social capital, Sergiovanni (1994) stated the importance of community, an aspect of social capital in the school setting in the following words:

Why is community building important in schools? Community is the tie that binds students and teachers together in special ways, to something more significant than themselves: shared values and ideals. It lifts both teachers and students to higher levels of self-understanding, commitment, and performance-beyond the reaches of the shortcomings and difficulties they face in everyday lives. Community can help teachers and students be transformed from a collection of "Is" to a collective "we", thus providing them with a unique and enduring sense of identity, belonging, and place. (p. xii)

Sergiovanni further suggested that schools will flourish if we rebuild community. All the efforts to improve instruction, provide authentic assessment, must be based on building community. Community gives us a sense of belonging and is universal. We feel connected to others, to ideas, and values, which make our lives meaningful. When we lose community, we lose meaning to life (pp. xi-xiv). While a loss of community impacts adults as well as children, the effects might be more critical to the young generation because they are building an identity. A shaky foundation might be detrimental to their lives more than for the adults. A girl who was interviewed in a study for the Sara Communication Initiative- SCI by UNICEF (2001) illustrated an example of poor social networking within the family. The girl reported that she lived with her father and her stepmother. When she had problems, whether it was sexual harassment or other needs, the stepmother was not responsive. When she told another adult in her community, she was advised to be patient until one day she would finish school (p. 55). Such is the plight of many girls who cannot live without their birth mothers because they have lost them through divorce or death. Yet, the availability of other members of society willing to listen and advise is a welcome situation in a world where many marriages break down or parents die and otherwise leave children without social security. Social networks within one's family or community networks would be helpful in alleviating girls' problems. As girls reach puberty and adolescence, they need adult women with whom they can communicate. In a study on *Social Capital in Relation to Children and Young People*, Morrow (2003) reported,

Parents but especially mothers, were very important to both age groups, and the emotional work that mothers do was very acknowledged and recognised by children, but particularly girls. Virtually all written comments children made

about their families (especially their mums) were positive, and this appeared to be regardless of family structure. (p. 5)

The above quote indicates the importance of a mother to growing boys and girls. Girls are more negatively impacted by the absence of a mother because of the way they share similar biological, emotional, and other experiences as they grow into adolescence and later, as young women. A mother, who becomes a role model for her daughters, is a crucial aspect of the girl's life.

The examination of social capital has implications for the education of all children but especially girls. In order to ensure sustainable development, social institutions should be efficient. Efficient institutions ensure social and political environments are places where norms and social structures are shaped. Institutions, which play an important role in human development, should ensure individual freedom in both the private and public spaces. In order to ensure sustainable development of nations, Grasso and Giulio (2002) stated,

There are certain preconditions for the success of the practices of sustainability, such as a) *good governance*, and b) *sound public management*. Besides, there are criteria that determine institutional efficiency and effectiveness in sustainability matters. In particular we refer to the following categories: 1) *long-term planning horizon*, 2) *delivery of public goods*, 3) *cost-effectiveness*, 4) *environmental effectiveness*, 5) *integration*. (p. 10)

Good governance, as stated by the Arab Human Development Report (2002), concerns liberating human capabilities; as Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General said, "Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development" (p. 107). The institutions concerned with governance include the state, civil society, and the private sector, which must be constructed to contribute to

sustainable development. Sustainable development encompasses the establishment of the political, legal, economic, and social conditions that liberate human capabilities (p. 107). This is the point at which Sen's Capability Approach to development and social capital meet. The Capabilities Approach to Development focuses on the development of people's abilities to be productive and social capital is concerned with the processes and conditions that are crucial for national development. If developing countries are to develop, it is imperative for leaders to invest in both human and social capital. These conditions are possible through quality public management carried out by visionary managers in all institutions including families, communities, schools, and nations. When such conditions prevail, girls as well as boys will contribute to the betterment of all humanity of the present and future generations.

2.12 Critiques of Social Capital Theory and Sen's Capability Approach

Although there are many positive aspects of social capital and Sen's Capabilities model, some researchers and theorists suggest that the theories need to be critically examined because we live in a changing society. The following sections highlight some of the observations made on the two perspectives.

2.12.1 Observations on Social Capital Theory

While social capital theorists emphasize the importance of family as the basis for human development, some observers suggest that there is need to consider theories of social change. "The nature of intimate relationships, globalized and flexible labour markets, and geographical mobility" (Edwards, 2002, p. 5) have impacted on social capital. Focusing on the traditional family as the focal point for the generation of social capital is not viable because the change in family structures is affected by the broader

structural condition in which they live (p. 5). For example, in the case of geographical mobility, male members of the family might benefit from work outside their towns, cities or countries more easily than women because they might not be tied down to the home due to the concerns of care for children and the elderly. Feminists have observed that due to such inequalities experienced by women, the family might not be the perfect ground for social capital generation.

Another observation by critics of social capital theory intimates that social change also encompasses increasingly ethnically diverse societies, which in turn can crosscut with social class inequalities. Edwards (2002) observed, “The extent to which social capital is available to families with limited resources and /or can be converted into economic capital, including that relating to employment and entrepreneurial development, is a subject of debate” (p. 5-6). This observation echoes the findings of Cleaver (2002) in his study of social capital among chronically poor citizens in Africa. He found that people who were very poor were not able to access social capital because they did not have the language or the confidence to articulate themselves outside their family circles (p. 4). Finally, Cleaver also observed that although some theorists have established that the family is the bedrock for bonding social capital, it is argued that in our changing society, bridging capital that people bring into the family through outside networks is equally effective in meeting people’s social capital needs (p. 6).

2.12.2 Critiques on Sen’s Capability Approach

Some critics of Sen’s (1999) Capability Approach point out that the approach might be problematic for individuals because “the language of rights, now widely accepted, is valuable in relation to individual freedom but does not take into account issues of gender justice within the family and the community” (p. 3). Although the

above observations might be true, in order to develop, nations require individual capabilities of their citizens, which enable them to participate. The capabilities potential is pervasive regardless of ethnicity. As Sen (1999) pointed out, the issue is the means toward that development. We need to consider the cultural setting, the potential that is already in existence within the setting that we want to influence. Individuals should be considered as agents and not mere beneficiaries of development (p. 11). The above observations have implications for the development of policy.

2.13 The Conceptual Framework

The research conceptual framework (Figure 2.1) for this inquiry was based on Social Capital Theory and Sen's Capability Model. Through these models, I am looking to see if the SCI was a vehicle that enabled girls in the two school communities to develop the necessary capabilities that would help them to contribute to Chikwawa's social capital.

The core conceptual framework is the well-being of the individual. Well-being is defined as "a happy, healthy and prosperous state or condition; moral or physical welfare" (The Canadian Oxford Dictionary, 2001, p.1469). The components of the Capability Approach to development as outlined by Nussbaum (2001) includes basic capabilities (physical health, love, and care); internal capabilities (capable within herself, confident, knowledgeable) and the external conditions (material and institutional environment) which provide the resources that enable individuals to develop. With regards to the basic capabilities, it is expected that individuals have a right to be able to live to the end of their expected length of life. Included in that right, is the ability to have a good life bodily, as well as to be ensured the freedom to move freely from place to

place without fear of violence. With regards to females, body integrity might include the freedom from work overload and sexual violence.

The second category of capabilities are internal capabilities, which include the sense of being capable within oneself, being confident of what one is, and knowledgeable. Nussbaum (2001) suggested that at this level an individual should be able to use the senses for imagination, reasoning, and thinking, while at the same time being assured of the freedom to express oneself. In addition, such an individual should be guaranteed freedom to express or practice his/her religion. An individual who has reached a state of wellbeing should demonstrate the ability to be attached to things and people, and love without fear and anxiety. The third aspect within this category includes the ability to engage in critical reflection of issues confidently.

External conditions surrounding an individual play an important role in ensuring wellbeing. Institutions that control our ability to access material needs, social interaction, political fulfillment, such as the family, schools, hospitals, and courts determine how far our capabilities can develop. While immediate, external institutional conditions, such as the home and school play a crucial role in our lives, the framework also suggests that the global economic and political climates determine the conditions by which resources and power will be distributed (Harcourt, 2001). In rural school communities, there is need for parents, teachers, and governments to ensure that provisions for the general development of pupils are met (Sen, 1999). At the school level, pupils should be ensured physical safety, friendly and caring learning environments, which are free from sexual harassment, belittling, and invisibility. Female students should feel safe, cared for, and acknowledged for who they are and not for utility purposes. They should be treated just as their male counterparts in order for them

to attain basic education and a positive self-esteem. To ensure the success of pupils in school, there is need for the availability of social support.

Khrishna and Uphoff (2002), NEF (2001), Flora (1994), Putnam, (2000) and Coleman (1998) outline some of the social capital tenets such as shared values, trust, social interaction, and sustainable communities. Khrishna and Uphoff (2002) listed the norms that fall within shared values, such as attitudes and beliefs. In the school setting, the success of the education of pupils, especially girls, might depend on the parents, teachers, and male students' attitudes towards female members.

Trust enables individuals to act together and understand and appreciate each others values. According to Healy (2003), trust refers to the individual's belief in the ability of others to keep promises and intentions, while Rahn and Transue (2003) suggested that individuals can also decide to trust people they don't know with the hope of gaining their trust with time. At the school level, trust is a crucial aspect in the decisions that parents make to send their children to school. Parents need to be assured that their children are safe in the hands of the teachers who are entrusted the responsibility of educating their children.

Social interaction is an aspect of social capital that enables individuals to meet face-to-face, to deepen their knowledge of each other, and to share common experiences which deepens understanding of each other (NEF, 2002, p. 5). Smith (2001) suggested that interaction helps people to build communities, which results in a sense of belonging. The observation has implications for schooling experiences of girls. To ensure success, there is need for girls to be accepted to fully participate in class activities equally as the boys. To achieve such a goal, the school should not continue to be labeled as an "environment of discouragement" for the girls (Miske & VanBelle-Prouty, (1997).

Sustainable communities are characterized by resources, which can improve their social, economic, and physical wellbeing. In order to attain such characteristics, sustainable communities require resources such as organized groups, labour, vision, and relationships (Flora, 1994). At the school level, the wellbeing of pupils depends on the availability of community support groups that assist in the provision of the physical, social, and economic needs of their children. Provision of pupil needs by parents should start in the home, where the seed for education begins and translates into visualizing what children can become. Parents may instill self-esteem in their children irrespective of their gender. Both sons and daughters should be provided with their physical and material needs to ensure success in school. At the school level, teachers should provide the best learning experiences that will motivate pupils to work harder in school. To ensure overall success, the wider community should ensure a healthy social, economic, and physical environment. Pupils should feel safe, loved, respected, and appreciated both at home and at school. Healthy relationships will ensure students' wellbeing and future sustainable communities. Figure 2.1 depicts the conceptual framework based on the capabilities and social capital model. The state of individual wellbeing is developed through the provision of the basic capabilities (physical and care needs), individual capabilities (mental and social needs), and external conditions such as economic and political capabilities. While such needs might prevail within the immediate communities, it is imperative that within the district, national, and global institutions, there is evidence of stable economic status within healthy gender relations to ensure individual wellbeing. At the school level, the collaborative participation of parents, teachers, pupils, and other stakeholders might ensure wellbeing of the students, as well as, academic prosperity regardless of gender.

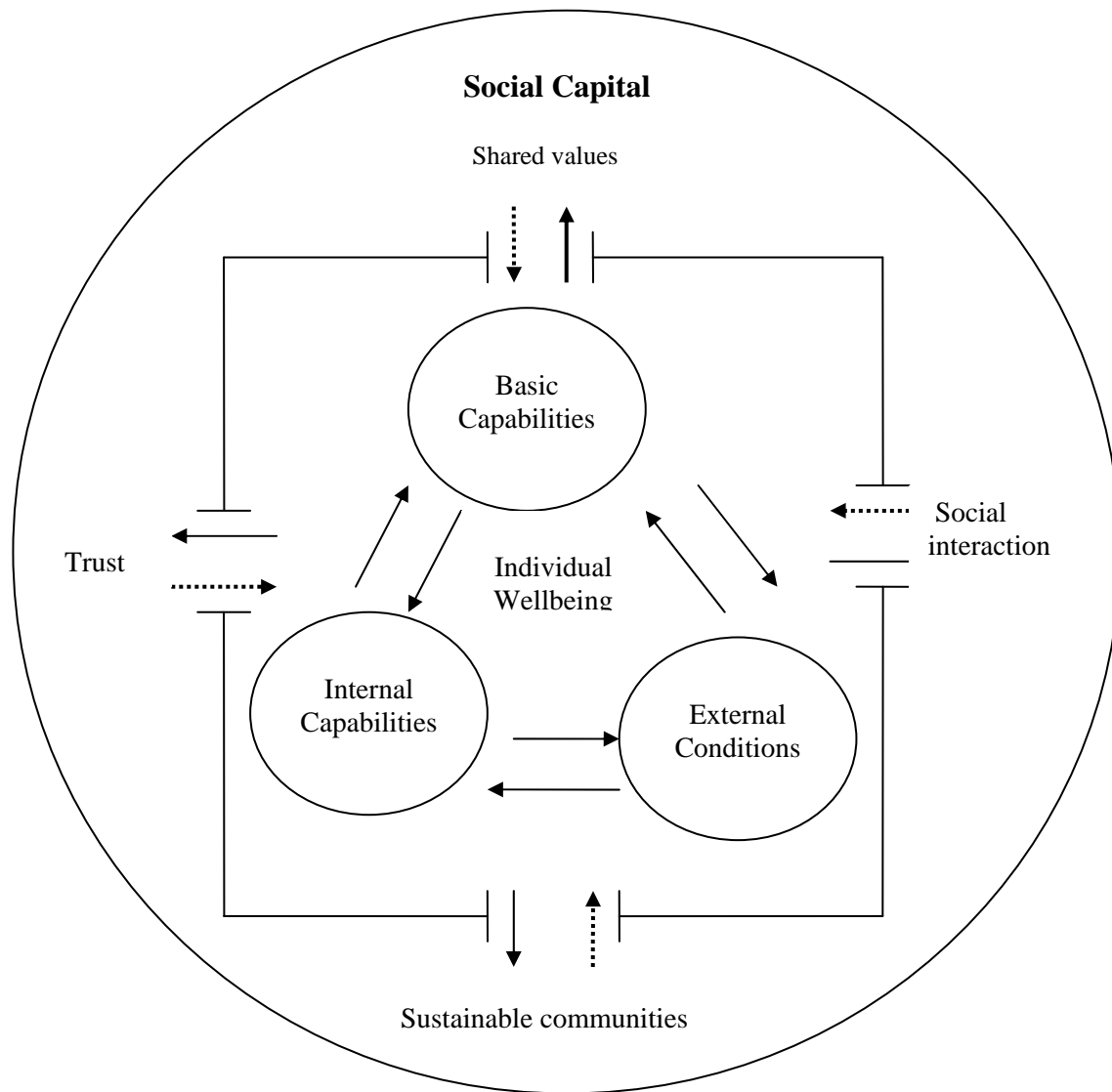


Figure 2.1: The Interrelationship between Capabilities and Social Capital
 [Adapted from Harcourt & Nussbaum (2001); Sen (1999)]

2.14 Summary

This chapter began by presenting the background to gender inequalities in developing countries, while examining the socio-cultural, socio-political, and the socio-economic contexts. Secondly, I summarised existing studies that have been conducted to

evaluate girls' education programs in different countries of the developing world. Thirdly, I discussed Women as Social Capital and Sen's Capabilities model to development adapted from Nussbaum's (2001), Robeyn's (2003), and UNICEF-Malawi's (n. d.) interpretations. Fourthly, an outline of the implications of Social Capital and Sen's Capabilities Approach to policy development followed. Fifthly, a presentation of the critiques of the social capital theory and the capabilities model was followed by a discussion of the conceptual framework.

The background to gender inequality was examined through the socio-cultural, socio-political, and socio-economic lenses because they are the major contexts where social structures that perpetuate gender discrimination are situated. Social practices that might need addressing are found in families, educational institutions, and political institutions. Research has found that the education of women empowers them to claim and to exercise their rights and privileges within the different social structures.

The existing studies that have been carried out to evaluate girls' education programmes in some of the developing countries indicate that when there was an effort to sensitize students, parents, and communities on gender inequalities, people would respond positively. Individuals are in some cases able to relate intervention programmes to real life issues. The presentation of Social Capital Theory and the Capabilities Approach to development has implications for sustainable development. For instance, the examination of social capital has revealed that social capital might not be easily accessible to the chronically poor compared to the not-so poor.

In terms of the Capabilities Approach, "public policy should take into consideration the respective roles of heterogeneities, environmental diversities,

variations in social climate, differences in relational perspectives and distributions within the family” (Sen, 1999, p. 109). The issue of public discussion and social participation is thus central to the making of policy in a democratic framework. In a freedom-oriented approach, the participatory freedoms are central to public policy analysis. At the educational level, the Capabilities Approach implies that policies that are advocated ensure the creation of caring and nurturing school environments through effective leadership. While leadership is crucial, there is need to balance it with interaction and the participation of community members as they decide which values to perpetuate.

The following chapter examines the research methodology. Feminist pedagogy as a tool for restructuring the educational process is assumed. In particular, participant observation is discussed, as I am directly a participant within the society where the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) was located.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by describing the research sites, outlining the research design, giving particular attention to case study research strategy. Next, I examine mixed research methods, highlighting qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. The chapter proceeds to an explanation of triangulation, sampling, criteria for judging research, and an outline of the research process. The chapter also describes the Malawi context, as well as the two research sites.

3.2 Research Design

The rationale for using case study strategy was, firstly, my interest in dealing with individual cases (Stake, 2000. p. 435). The two school communities that I engaged in the study were located in separate geographical areas, which made them unique. Secondly, because the communities were bound within unique geographical, cultural, social, and economic contexts, it was interesting to find out how such situations might have impacted the SCI programme. Yin (1993) stated, “Case studies can use any relevant data collection procedure, including fieldwork and participant-observation, surveys, quantitative modeling of archival data, and methods of document analysis derived from the field of history” (p. 74). The mixed method fit in well with the case study approach. Such diverse methods of data collection assisted me to capture the uniqueness of the school communities that I studied. Using two case studies within the

same district also enabled me to compare similarities and differences that existed. Finally, since my study was small scale (Knight, 2002, pp. 41-42), the bounded nature of the cases enabled me to concentrate on the selected sites.

3.2.1 Case Study

Case study refers to “the in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 436). Examples of phenomena are programs, curricula, roles, and events. The case study as a research strategy focuses on understanding the dynamics present within a single setting (Huberman & Miles, 2002, p. 8). Further, Huberman and Miles suggested that case studies typically combine data collection methods such as archives, interviews, questionnaires, and observations. A researcher may utilize qualitative (e.g. words) or quantitative (e.g. numbers) evidence or both in casework (p. 9). Case study is not a choice of the method but a choice of the phenomenon to be studied. Case studies are defined by one’s interest in individual cases, and not by the methods of investigation used (Stake, 2000, p. 435).

In this study, my conceptual structure was organized around the capability development and social capital conceptual frameworks. My data collection methods answer the questions that I stated before the study began (See Table 3.2, p. 97). The study reflects to some extent what Stake (2000) suggested that case studies have a conceptual structure organized around a small number of questions. Issues that might be examined within the conceptual structure can be complex, situated, and problematic. My study was intrinsic or instrumental in nature because I wanted better understanding of the particular case. Researchers begin with cases that have already been identified, for instance, by the doctor, social worker, and the programme evaluator. Instrumental and

collective casework requires researchers to choose casework. Inquirers need to choose their cases well to ensure they understand the critical phenomena (Stake, 2000, p. 446). Stake further indicated, “For qualitative fieldwork, we draw a purposive sample, building in variety and acknowledging opportunities for intensive study” (p. 446). Sampling is necessary because cases are expected to represent some population of cases.

In order to carry out an in-depth study of the SCI, I selected two schools, one located in a remote rural setting, while the other was located within a rural town. Bahr and Albretch (1984) suggested that researchers might use observations/ interviews, records and reports, and surveys to collect data (p. 297). In addition, it is also necessary that the researcher create a democratic climate in order to carry out an effective inquiry.

3.2.2 Democratic evaluation

Democratic evaluation has emerged due to the dissatisfaction of some researchers with programme evaluations, which base their measurement on a few specified outcomes. “Many clients in government, business, education, and social service agencies place highest priority on indicators of productivity and efficiency with low priority for social costs and the personal concerns of citizens” (Mackee & Stake, 2002, p. 121). The proponents of democratic evaluation argued that there is more reliance on statistical criteria as data for strategic thinking and operational decision making than on the experience of professionals.

There was growing dissatisfaction with the traditional role of the evaluator as measurement expert. House argued that qualitative research, particularly with its emphasis upon gathering the views of participants and outsiders, gained popularity in this climate. One definition of democracy in evaluation means honoring the issues, experiences, and values of people, especially the poor and minorities and those remote from the centers of power. (Mackee & Stake, p. 123)

The authors further observed that the objective of a democratic evaluator is to serve the needs of the public and the powerless. Democratic evaluation goes hand in hand with “strategies for emancipation and decentralization.” In order to serve the needs of the public, the evaluation and the evaluator should both be independent (Mackee & Stake, p. 125). To ensure balanced evaluation in terms of values, stakeholders, and politics, House and Howe (1999) made a number of suggestions: Firstly, they suggested that evaluation should represent all relevant views, interests, values, and stakeholders. Secondly, they advised evaluators to dialogue with relevant groups so that their views are well represented. Thirdly, the authors proposed that evaluators need to establish deliberation to ensure proper findings (p. xx). Mackee and Stake (2002) also asserted that democratic evaluation is more than the questions and the stakeholders. It included the unpredictable concerns that develop during the inquiry. It includes the needs of the marginalized and the right of the public to know (p. 133).

The subject of democratic evaluation fit with my study of the SCI because the research process addressed the problems of girls as a marginalized segment of society. As a Malawian female researcher, I tried to pay attention to the needs of women and girls, as well as the poor in the way I conducted my research. In order to be fair and just, I attempted to create a climate that might expose and validate women’s and girls’ everyday experiences of subordination and survival and resistance strategies (Madriz, 2000, p. 836). Through the use of research strategies such as focus groups and semi-structured interviews, and the use of Malawi’s vernacular language, I endeavoured to encourage the participants, especially females, to converse freely. When I conducted focus group interviews, I engaged a moderator who came from the district because although I am a Malawian I did not share a similar culture. As well, although we spoke

Malawi's vernacular language, their dialect was somewhat different from mine. In addition, although interviews were dialogues, I needed to be willing to listen to the issues that came up, even those I did not intend to talk about. The whole procedure of research was about empowering the participants and not me. Finally, it was my intention to share the findings of the study with the stakeholders.

3.3 Methods

When deciding on the method one will engage during an inquiry, researchers are advised to focus on the nature of the problem and understand the questions they want to answer before selecting the inquiry method (Shulman, 1988, p. 15). Shulman argued, "Method is the attribute which distinguishes research activity from mere observation" (p. 4). In order to engage in effective inquiry, researchers need to have a systematic way of organizing the activity. Further, Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) stated,

we believe that research should be done with a clear intent to answer a question, solve a problem or evaluate a program. We stress the importance and predominance of the research question over the paradigm, and we encourage researchers to use appropriate methods for both approaches to answer their research question. (p. x)

Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) also suggested that researchers in the social and behavioural sciences might best answer their questions using mixed methods or mixed model designs (p. x). The following section examines aspects of mixed research methods.

3.3.1 Mixed Research Methods

The justification for engaging in mixed methods research in educational settings, is that some contexts are too complex to be examined with just one lens. In order to cater to such a situation, current international research is being carried out in a multicultural environment, which requires sensitivity and openness, as well as the ability to deal with

change. In order to deal with such contexts, we require a mixed-method framework for educational and social research. Mathie and Greene (2002) stated,

Mixing methods signifies the incorporation of multiple, diverse ways of knowing and valuing within the same study, so that the resultant claims to know are broader, deeper, and wiser. Mixed method-inquiry, that is, implies openness to other views and perspectives, not just to rival explanatory hypotheses, but more profoundly to rival ways of thinking and valuing. Good mixed-method inquiry actively invites diverse ways of thinking and valuing to dialogue and to work in concert with one another toward better understanding. In good mixed method inquiry, difference is constitutive and generative. (p. 141)

The paradigms that researchers engage in when conducting mixed methods research are the positivist paradigm, which underlies what is called quantitative methods and the constructivist paradigm, which underlies qualitative methods (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p. 3). Feminist theory, to which the SCI relates, also recognizes the use of mixed methods in research.

Usher (1996) stated that feminist social research utilizes both quantitative and qualitative methods that have been supplied by social research. In addition, the research uses its own standpoint in order to create varying and innovative approaches to studying human activity (p. 131). One of the themes that characterize feminist research, which should guide the development of new approaches, is the fact that feminist research reaches into all disciplines and uses all methods. As well, feminist research does not only study gender, but ensures that any area of social practice is sensitive to the distinctive experiences of females and males. Multiple methods allow women to study a broad range of subject matters and reach a broad set of goals. Approaches and methods that might be used in studies that are feminist include case studies, cross-cultural research, ethnography, interview and oral history methods, and surveys or experimental designs (Usher, 1996, p. 132).

3.3.2 Qualitative Research

Some of the methods of data collection that qualitative researchers use are: interviews, surveys, document analysis, and participant observation. For the purposes of this study, I collected data using the following methods: participant observation, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, document analysis, and photographs.

3.3.2.1 Participant observation

Participant observation is a special methodology that is adapted to the distinctive character of human existence (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 7). The methodology of participant observation is an art and almost literally a way of life appropriately constituted as oral tradition. Jorgensen suggested that the methodology of participant observation is exceptional for studying processes, relationships among people, and events. (p. 9).

Researchers in the field of ethnography have identified several roles of a participant observer, such as complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant, and complete observer. As a researcher, my role fitted within the participant as observer category. Participants as observers are open about their purposes and, as a result, have to negotiate access at every level of research. As a participant observer, openness about my purposes was crucial to the success of the SCI study because I was dealing with children who were under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education is answerable to the individual children, parents, and the public in general; hence, the need to ensure that access was sought (Appendix B).

Since participant observers need to record data, I kept in mind the guidelines on note taking. Jorgensen (1989) suggested that type, form, and content of the notes depend on personal preference and style, the issues being studied, the setting, situations of observation, and the technology used. Researchers are advised to record dates, times,

places, status, roles, activities of key people, and major activities and events. In addition, “notes and files may be hand written; typewritten; recorded by still photography; audio-video equipment, and audiotape; or processed on a computer” (p. 96). It is also advisable to record casual conversations and interviews. Fetterman (1989) advised the researchers to make notes regarding personal “mood, attitude, and prejudice during a specific stage of the research endeavor. Taking notes during a specific stage of the research can provide a context from which to view primary field notes at that particular stage” (p. 108). A researcher should record everything in the setting, even the information that might not seem useful at that moment. During the SCI study, I recorded my notes by hand and typed them on the computer. I also recorded data from the focus group interviews on a tape. Transcription was carried out using a transcribing machine, but translation was carried out while typing on the computer.

3.3.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews lie between the structured and unstructured interviews (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 240). During the SCI study, I used semi-structured interviews to collect data from coordinating teachers of the SCI, the national coordinator of FAWEMA and to some extent from the parents and pupils. I used a sequence of structured questions and where necessary deeper open-ended questions were used and these enabled me to keep time and make sure that the data were relevant to the objectives of the study. I assumed that using structured interviews would help use words that were familiar, as well as approach the world from the participants’ perspective. The approach was not successful all the time because sometimes I still needed to repeat some questions to ensure that I collected accurate data.

In terms of the characteristics of semi-structured interviews, Knight (2002) stated that firstly, interviews are usually longer and may be very long, sometimes making it difficult for one to find committed informants. Secondly, the use of open probes might subject the process to more complexity, uncertainty, and things that the interviewer might not have expected. Thirdly, the validity of the data is dependent on the quality of the questions and to a certain extent on the creativity of the informant. “Reliability takes second place to validity. Usually, evidence that the interviewer’s actions or the prompts on a questionnaire were appropriate is a proxy for formal evidence of reliability” (pp. 63-64). In addition, Fowler (1993, as cited in Verma & Mallick, 1999, p.124) advised researchers to attempt to standardize interviews by the way they present research questions and task, the way they ask questions and probe, the way answers are recorded, and the way interpersonal issues are dealt with.

3.3.2.3 Focus groups

Focus groups consist of a group of individuals, who are assembled and are asked questions by an interviewer. The individuals who make a focus group are considered well informed about the research topic (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 238).

During the SCI study, I utilized the focus group to obtain data from parents and pupils. The members were invited to participate based on what they knew about the SCI and the school communities in general. To ensure effective focus group discussions, I followed some of Berg’s (2001) basic ingredients of focus groups:

1. I defined objectives and / or research problems
2. I determined that the nature of the group was heterogeneous
3. I did my best to provide a positive atmosphere/ and rapport
4. I assured confidentiality of information by ensuring they signed a statement of confidentiality

5. I organized, prepared and ensured a focus group moderator
6. I structured and provided direction, but did not restrain contribution to discussion
(pp. 123-124)

One of the points to be emphasized to the members of the group is the need for confidentiality. “Ensuring confidentiality is critical if the researcher expects to get truthful and free-flowing discussions during the course of the focus group interview” (p. 128). When members sense that their contributions might be revealed, they will not express their feelings freely. To ensure confidentiality, members should sign a statement of confidentiality (Appendices E, F, G, I, J, K). For the purposes of the SCI, participants signed two copies of consent forms. One copy was kept by each of the participants while the researcher kept the other copy.

Feminist researchers such as Madriz (2000) are also interested in focus groups as a method of data collection. “Major concerns of feminist/postmodernist ethnographers are the moral dilemmas present in the process of interviewing and the role of the interviewer in this process” (p. 835). Despite the moral concerns, feminists recognize the advantages of focus groups. Madriz (2000) further stated that “focus groups can be an important element in the advancement of an agenda for social justice for women, because they can serve to expose and validate women’s everyday experiences of subjugation and their individual collective survival and resistance strategies” (p. 836). Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond my control I was only able to conduct joint parents (Figure 3.1) and pupils’ focus groups during the study. Despite the drawback, women and girls participated freely.



Figure 3.1 Parents of Eastern School Community Participating in a Focus Group

3.3.2.4 Gendered interviews

Fontana and Frey (2000) observed that the traditional interviewing paradigm has not accounted for gender differences. The interviewers and the respondents have been considered inconspicuous. Typically, the interview process has occurred within a hierarchy, where the interviewee is in a subordinate position. In order to gain trust and confidence, researchers are advised to be courteous, friendly, and pleasant. Feminist researchers work towards establishing “closer relation between interviewer and respondent; researchers are attempting to minimize status differences and are doing away with the traditional hierarchical situation in interviewing” (pp. 657-658). Interviewers can show their human side and answer questions, as well as express

feelings. These observations were crucial to the success of my inquiry because dialoguing is an important aspect of the Malawian culture.

3.3.2.6 Photographs

In addition to the strategies that have been outlined above, my study included still photographs as a source of data. Patton (1980) observed that photographic materials help an observer to recall things that have happened, as well as clearly communicate the setting to others. Looking at pictures might also enable the researcher to remember details of certain activities that were not fully recorded in the written notes (p. 166). Jorgensen (1989) echoed similar sentiments in the following words:

Photographs efficiently capture visual aspects of field locations and settings. Several hours' verbal description of the setting may be reduced to a few minutes of photography. These records sometimes preserve important, though not so readily apparent, details for subsequent analysis. (p. 103)

While many people consider photographs as reliable evidence, Jones (1996) presented a number of limitations to their use as evidence. Firstly, photographs can be manipulated deliberately or unconsciously to change the message that they convey. For example, before taking the photo, the scene or people in the picture can stage an appearance that conveys a particular message. As well, people can manipulate prints and negatives. For example, placing two or more negatives of different images over each other to form one picture can create a photomontage. Airbrushing and cropping can be used to delete portions of pictures causing a distortion of the message that they were originally intended to convey. Finally, manoeuvring of photographs can take place through the manner of display and selection of words or captions that accompany them. In order to use photographs as effective evidence, it is necessary that the inquirer ask about the



Figure 3.2 Rub-Hall from Outside-Eastern School

conditions under which they were taken, processed, selected, and presented (p. 54).

To increase the ability to analyze the evidence from pictures, researchers might do well to take their own pictures whenever possible.

In my study of the SCI, I took my own pictures of the different aspects of the school communities. The still photographs have enabled me to enhance the knowledge of the issues with which rural schools in Malawi struggle as they try to educate boys and girls. An example of struggles that communities experience is the use of the rub-hall (Figure 3.2) to house several classes. The photographs have been disbursed in this document wherever they relate to the issue under discussion.

To ensure reliability, I took the picture of the settings myself. Since I have been describing places to which some Malawians, but not others are familiar, it was necessary to take pictures of people and places in context. When I took the photographs of the people, I took the pictures of them the way they were. The school communities that I visited would not be expected to perform differently, as they valued acceptance and respect, especially as some were older members of the community. I brought the exposed films back to Canada. When I look at the pictures, they portrayed the actual settings that I described without identifying them.

3.3.2.6 Document analysis

Since this study involved a school setting, it was imperative that I also study the available documents within the school. Document analysis refers to the study of written communication found in natural situations (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 282). Written communication can exist as documents and records. Documents are prepared for personal rather than official reasons. They include diaries, memos, letters, field notes. “Records, on the other hand, may have local uses that become very distant from officially sanctioned meanings” (Hodder, 2000, pp. 703-704). With regards to the SCI, I was only able to study lesson plans used by the teachers whose classes I visited. The lesson plans generally reflected the learning processes that took place. Details of the lesson observations are recorded in Chapter 4.

3.3.3. Quantitative Research

Quantitative research also referred to as experimental, ex post facto or correlational, and survey, uses structured interviews, posted questionnaires, standardized tests of performance, and attitude inventories (Scott & Usher, 1996, p. 59). Quantitative study limits data collection through the use of standardized instruments. In order to

measure people's experiences, and important variables, programme settings are fit into the standardized categories to which numerical values are then attached. One of the advantages of the quantitative measurement is the production of succinct, parsimonious, and easily aggregated data for analysis (Patton, 1980, p. 22). The other advantage is that a quantitative questionnaire can be responded to in the absence of the evaluator. Since there might be limited contact with the respondents when one uses the questionnaire, then in addition the inquirer might engage in interviews in order to record issues that relate to the emotions of the subjects, such as anger, pain, or joy.

3.3.4.1 Questionnaires

Bernard (2000) outlined three types of questionnaires that can be administered as interviews in research, which are the face-to-face questionnaire, the self-administered questionnaire, and the telephone interview. The choice of the survey method that a researcher might want to use depends on cost, convenience, and the nature of questions that one asks. The researcher might utilize the self-administered questionnaire by mailing it to the subject or dropping it off to the subject or administering it to all the subjects in one place all at once (p. 229).

For the purposes of the SCI study, I utilized the self-administered questionnaire, which was completed by the students who were members of the SCI clubs. The advantages of using a self-administered questionnaire were that respondents got similar questions. As well, I was able to ask more questions than in a personal interview, which made it easier for me to follow written responses. In addition, pupils seemed free to share their personal experiences through the open-ended item than if I had interviewed them. In the SCI study, the self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from the

students at one sitting. I personally administered the questionnaires at the two selected schools.

3.4 Triangulation of Participants and Methods

In order to increase the validity and reliability of research studies, some research practitioners recommend triangulation of data from different methods. Patton (1980) recommended that, “multiple methods and triangulation of observations contributes to methodological rigor” (p. 18). The use of varying methods of collecting data assists the researcher and other users of the data to make meaning of some aspects, which might not have otherwise made sense if the methods were not triangulated. Denzin (1978, as cited in Janesick, 2000) suggested the following methodological mixes:

1. *Data triangulation*, the use of a variety of data sources in a study.
2. *Investigator triangulation* involves the use of several different researchers or evaluators.
3. *Theoretical triangulation* involves the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data.
4. *Methodological triangulation* refers to the use of multiple methods to study a single program or problem. (p. 391)

Patton (1980) further advised that although triangulation is ideal, it is also very expensive, since most research is planned on limited budgets, short time frames, and due to political constraints. Despite the limitations, researchers are encouraged to use triangulation where possible (p. 109).

3.5 Data Collection

After receiving ethics approval from the University of Saskatchewan and authorization from the Ministry of Education in Malawi, a meeting was arranged with the District Education Manager (DEM) to gain entry into the selected school communities. I was assigned the Primary Education Advisor (PEA) who was responsible for the area to assist my entry. After discussing the logistics of the research, I asked the PEA to arrange appointments with the head teachers of Eastern and Southern schools. It was necessary for some one to go there physically because there were no telephones at these schools and post office service is slow.

3.6 Sampling

The research sample of convenience in the SCI study included adolescent girls and boys who were familiar with the SCI programme in the two selected schools. Each school had 30 pupils who were requested to take part in the study. In addition, teachers, parents, and selected community leaders within the selected school communities were included within the sample. The sample selection was heterogeneous, because the participants of the study were differentiated in terms of their age, gender, position, and school location. Since the SCI inquiry engaged both male and female participants, the researcher was aware of the possibility of experiencing feminist interviewer effect. “Several commentators have argued that power-laden differences, for example, of race, class, age, sexuality, dis/ablement, all have the potential to disrupt any possibility of identification between interviewer and interviewee” (Kobayashi, 1994 as cited in Bondi, 2003, p. 3). Such situations should alert the researcher on the need to identify participants’ differences so that they can be acknowledged. As a researcher of the SCI, I did my best not to assume similarities between the participants and myself because such an approach might have

resulted in structures of oppression and exploitation of the respondents. Our differences were acknowledged and respected during the process of the interview.

The study sample was recruited through the assistance of the head teachers who were familiar with the communities. The sample was purposefully selected by ensuring that the SCI club members were available and that they could read and write. As well, the parents who were invited were involved to some extent with the school activities. The participants were chosen with prior knowledge of their individual characteristics, such as sensitization to the SCI and accessibility (Patton, 1980, p.100). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2001) suggested,

A non-probability sample deliberately avoids representing the wider population; it seeks only to represent a particular group, a particular named section of the wider population, e.g. a class of students, a group of students who are taking a particular examination, a group of teachers. (p. 99)

In addition, Cohen et al. (2001) explained that non-probability sampling, which includes purposive sampling, is often used for small-scale research. Purposive sampling is advantageous because it is far less complicated to set up and considerably less expensive (p. 102).

In this respect, the SCI met the qualification for criterion-based sampling because the schools that provided the participants for my study had been decided upon, prior to the inquiry. In addition, I had set prior boundaries of the sampling by choosing to study only adolescent students, teachers, head teachers, parents, and community leaders who were within the selected two school communities.

The study of the SCI took place between the months of February and April 2005. Before the data were collected at each site, the study was described to the participants and they signed consent forms. Respondents were free to ask questions if they were not

clear. Data were collected from both boys and girls using a questionnaire, which had closed questions and one open-ended item. The researcher administered the student questionnaires. In addition to the questionnaire, two focus groups for students were conducted at both Eastern and Southern schools. Data from the parents were collected through two focus group discussions located at both schools. An observation that I made was that parents were more interested in the development discourse than the gender issues through the SCI. The development needs were their agenda of interest. I spent a total of six weeks in the field.

Table 3.1

Number of Participants at Parents Focus Groups (n=41)

School	n(Male)	n(Female)	Total	Percent
Eastern	10	11	21	51
Southern	10	10	20	49
Total	20	21	41	100

The focus group data were collected from 41 participants 49 % men and 51% women. The Southern school parent focus group was represented by 10 men and 10 women, while Eastern parents' focus group was represented by 11 women and 10 men (Table 3.1). To ensure effective focus group discussions, the Primary Education Advisor (PEA) was the moderator, while I listened and taped. I interviewed one coordinating teacher and head teacher of Eastern school and the head teacher of Southern school. The

coordinating teacher at Southern school was away at that time. I also interviewed the National Coordinator of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWEMA).

3.7 Data Analysis

Analysis of the data was completed qualitatively and quantitatively. Data analysis was categorized as involving data management and data analysis. Huberman and Miles (1998) explained, “unless a reasonably coherent system is in place for collecting information from a range of informants, across a potential range of sites, in a roughly comparable format, the researcher will be in data management limbo very quickly” (p. 183). Data management is essential for a well-ordered data collection, data storage, and data recovery. Proper data management ensures documentation of the analyses that have been carried out and the retention of data after completing the study. The processes of data analysis were carried out before data collection, during research design and planning, during data collection, and after data collection as final products were written (Huberman & Miles, 1994, as cited in Huberman & Miles, 1998, p. 181).

Data analysis is linked to three sub-processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In order to engage in data reduction, the researcher chooses a framework, research questions, cases, and instruments. Data collection in the form of notes, interviews, and tapes or other available data, such as data summaries, coding, finding themes, clustering and writing stories, are all instances of further data selection and condensation. Data display involves the organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and / or action taking. Disclosure of data is a second, inescapable, part of analysis. Drawing conclusions and verifying the data suggests drawing meaning from the displayed data using comparison and contrast, patterns and

themes, clustering, use of metaphors, triangulation, and negative cases (Miles & Huberman, 1994, as cited in Huberman & Miles, 1998, p. 181).

3.7.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

For the purposes of the SCI study, I utilized descriptive statistics for quantitative data analysis of the student survey. Simple statistics such as percentages and means and correlations characterized the descriptive methods.

3.7.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis requires the evaluator to keep reviewing the guidelines for conducting the research. Constant reference to the guidelines might require the researcher to discuss earlier suggestions with information users or decision-makers to make sure that the focus of the research has not changed. Discussion of the data analysis with key people assures the researcher that the analysis is based on needed information. Discussions with key people and users of the information continually prepare information users for the evaluation results. In addition, for the researchers, reopening conversations helps them to keep perspective on the questions that they might be able to answer with the particular data that they have collected. Finally, reopening conversations with key people also makes researchers aware of the questions whose answers are crucial to the study and new realizations that might have developed from the study (Patton, 1980, pp. 296-297).

Tashakorri and Teddlie (1998) added that the analysis of traditional qualitative data is grouped based on the themes that were established before the study and those which evolved during the analysis. Next, the data were grouped depending on the degree of complexity (p. 117). In this study, the interview data that were available from the coordinating teachers, parents and pupils' focus groups were analyzed using the themes that emanated from the objectives of the study. As well, the data were grouped on the

basis of simplicity and complexity. The themes were established based on the conceptual framework in the research proposal, which guided the formation of questions for the interviews.

3.8 Criteria for Judging Research

In order to ensure credibility of the data from any study, the instruments that are used should be reliable and valid. The major issues that credibility addresses are *reliability* and the *validity* of the data. According to Bernard (2000),

reliability refers to whether or not you get the same answer by using an instrument to measure something more than once...Validity refers to the accuracy and trustworthiness of instruments, data, and findings in research. Nothing in research is more important than validity (pp. 46-47)

3.8.1 Validity

Yin (1994) proposed three tactics that might increase validity in case study research. The first standard is construct validity, which refers to establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied. In order to meet the test of construct validity, an investigator is advised to select the specific types of changes that are to be studied (in relation to the original objectives of the study). In addition, the investigator is advised to demonstrate that the selected measures of these changes reflect the specific types of change that have been chosen (p. 34). The three strategies for increasing construct validity are the use of multiple sources of evidence, establishing a chain of evidence, and having the draft case study report reviewed by principal informants engaged in the study.

The second test refers to internal validity, which is only applicable in causal case studies. The other aspect of internal validity is that it is crucial that case study researchers make inferences every time an event cannot be observed. “Thus an

investigator will ‘infer’ that a particular event resulted from some earlier occurrence, based on interview and documentary evidence collected as part of the case study” (p. 35). Some of the questions that might be asked in order to determine internal validity include whether the inference is correct; whether the evidence appears to be incontestable; and whether the evidence blends together (p. 35).

The third test that is applicable to case study inquiry is external validity, which “deals with the problem of knowing whether a study’s findings are generalizable beyond the immediate case study” (Yin, 1994, p. 35). Since qualitative cases are unique to their physical, economic, ethical, and aesthetic contexts and situations, they cannot be easily generalized. Case study researchers are safer generalizing cases to theories that they come up with from the research results (Stake, 2000, p. 438).

With reference to the SCI study, I utilized methodological and participant triangulation. Participant triangulation involved comparing data collected through the different participants such as students, parents and teachers. Methodological triangulation involved the use of qualitative and quantitative methods. It was my hope that through the triangulation of the different data, I might have conducted less biased research. As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000) explained, when we use more methods of data collection, we have more confidence in our data. For example, when the results of a questionnaire correspond to the results of an observational study of the same episode, then the researcher has confidence in the findings (p. 112).

In addition, member-checking was used to determine accuracy of the final report. The researcher used thick description to convey the findings of the study. The negative themes that were contrary to the expected themes were presented, as well. A peer

debriefers were engaged to review the findings of the study and give feedback to ensure accuracy of the study (Creswell, 2003, pp. 195- 196).

Finally, before the data were collected, a pilot study was carried out in one of the schools that was engaged in the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) in the district, but not included in my study. The purpose was to check if the students' questionnaire was clear. I learned that students were not able to answer the open-ended questions easily. They took too long and their writing skills were inadequate. To ensure efficient data collection from the respondents, I decided to change the open-ended questions to closed questions, except one. The question that was left open-ended enabled me to hear the views of the students concerning the SCI and gender discrimination. I discussed the decision with my supervisor, who gave me the go ahead. I sent him the revised questionnaire, which he approved. The questionnaire was translated into Malawis' national language, Chichewa.

3.8.2 Reliability

Finally, reliability is a test that demonstrates that "the operations of a study-such as the data collection procedures can be repeated, with the same results" (p. 35). By conducting a reliability test, a researcher tries to minimize the errors and biases in a study. Repetition of a case study depends on well-documented procedures, which can be followed by another investigator. Yin (1994) proposed that reliability can be enhanced if the inquirer makes many steps as operational as possible. To ensure reliable investigations, researchers should conduct studies as if someone were always looking over their shoulder (p. 37). In the case of the SCI study, the researcher, in a limited way, used reliability checks for consistent patterns of theme development from the different sources of data. In research that focuses on cases and qualitative answers, validity or

trustworthiness is more important than reliability. I developed a research question matrix to ensure efficiency (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

Research Question Matrix

Research Question	Source of Data	Items
1. What was the nature of the SCI?	(a) Student Questionnaires (b) Interview Guide for Students' Focus Groups (c) Interview Guide for Parents' Focus Groups (d) Interview Guide for No. UNICEF Representative	Section A (Nos. 7-14) Sections A, B, C, & D Section III (Nos.1-4) No. 1
2. What were the perceptions of students, parents, and teachers about the SCI programme?	(a) Students' Questionnaire (b) Interview Guide for Students' Focus Groups (c) Interview Guide for Parents' Focus Groups (d) Interview Guide for Teachers	Nos. 19-24, 27 & 28 Sections A, B, C, & D Section III (Nos. 1-4) Section IV (Nos. 1-5) Nos. 9-16
3. To what extent did the stakeholders perceive the social capital of girls had been enhanced through the SCI?	(a) Students' Questionnaire (b) Interview Guide for Students' Focus Groups (c) Interview Guide for Parents' Focus Groups (d) Interview Guide for Teachers	Nos. 25 & 26 Sections E Section V (Nos. 1-10) Nos. 12-13 & 15

3.9 Ethical Issues

Researchers justify their engagement in studies about human behaviour and social processes on the need for solutions to human problems that are rampant in our world today. However, as Jones (1996) observed,

The problem is that although we may agree that knowledge and understanding are ideals worthy of pursuit, there are other ideals we may, at times, value even more highly. When such a conflict of ideals occurs, the issue of whether or not one should conduct the research in question may be said to pose an ethical dilemma. (p. 33)

Jones (1996) further suggested that it is the responsibility of the researcher to decide whether a particular study is justified (p. 33). An anthropologist should anticipate misunderstandings and conflicts that may cause ethical dilemmas. If the conflicts cannot be resolved, one is well advised not to continue with the research (Spradley, 1980, p. 20). The principles guiding ethical research, which might have arisen in my research, according to the American Psychological Association (APA, 1982) include: respect for human dignity, respect for free and informed consent, respect for privacy and confidentiality, respect for vulnerable persons, and maximizing benefit.

3.9.1 Respect for Human Dignity

The respect for human dignity is the foundation on which most ethical responsibilities of research with humans are based (Government of Canada, 2005, p. 2). “This principle aspires to protecting the multiple and interdependent interests of the person—from bodily to psychological to cultural integrity” (APA, 1982, p.i.5). Before the SCI study was conducted at each location, I ensured that my objectives were clearly laid out to the primary school head teachers, teachers, members of development committees, who also represented the interests of the parents within the school communities, and students. I also discussed my research interests with the Primary Education Advisor (PEA) who was resident within the zones where the selected schools were located.

3.9.2 Respect for Free and Informed Consent

Another principle refers to the respect for free and informed consent. “Respect for persons thus means respecting the exercise of individual consent” (APA, 1982, p.1.

5). Since the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) study was conducted in a setting where I was a stranger, I explained my research mission to the participants in the presence of the Primary Education Advisor. After consenting to participate in the study, the participants were asked to sign a consent form that indicated the conditions of the research contract. The form included a statement that stipulated that the study was voluntary (Appendices E, F, G, I, J, & K). The consent forms for the parents and students were translated into Chichewa, Malawi's national language to ensure understanding. The consent forms were read to the participants to ensure their understanding. Students were assured that if they chose to withdraw from the study, their grades would not be affected. Teachers were assured that there would be no impact on their jobs if they decided not to participate. Parents were also assured that if they chose not to participate, their decision would not impact on their image, or the community's image.

3.9.3 Respect for Privacy and Confidentiality

This principle is worth considering because “In many cultures, privacy and confidentiality are considered fundamental to human dignity. Thus standards of privacy and confidentiality protect the access, control, and dissemination of personal information” (APA, 1982, p.i.5). To ensure anonymity, the participants, the Primary Education Advisor and I signed a Confidentiality Agreement Form (Appendices E, F, G, I, J, & K).

3.9.4 Respect for Vulnerable Persons

In my research, vulnerable persons implied pupils and their parents within the rural areas where the research was done. Since rural communities are usually poor and

parents struggle to meet their daily needs, they sometimes have low self-esteem. As an outsider from the city, it was necessary to be sensitive in the way I presented myself. In such settings one should not be intimidating in the manner of speech or dress. People deserve to be respected and made to feel that they are partners in the research process. With regards to the SCI, I did my best to be respectful and accepting of my participants.

3.9.5 Maximizing Benefit

This principle “imposes a duty to benefit others and, in research ethics, a duty to maximize net benefits” (p.i.6). The principle applies to my research because of the nature of the study of the SCI, whose purpose was to sensitize school communities on the importance of enabling girls to stay in school and finally achieve. When the Ethics Committee approved my research proposal (Appendix A) and I began the study, it was necessary to hear the voices of the participants. After completion of the research, I plan to disseminate the research findings to interested stakeholders and send the recommendations to UNICEF-Malawi office, the caretakers of the SCI, FAWEMA, the policy makers in the Ministry of Education and other interested parties.

3.10 Context for Study

In this section of the chapter I present the geography, history, economy, industry, population, and literacy in Malawi

3.10.1 Geography

Malawi is located south of the equator in sub-Saharan Africa and is landlocked. Malawi shares borders with Tanzania to the north and northeast, Mozambique to the east, south, and southwest, and Zambia to the west and northwest (Appendix T1). Malawi is 901 kilometres long, ranging in width from 80 to 161 kilometres. The total area is 118,484 square kilometres of which 94,276 square kilometres is land area and the

balance of which is the lake. Lake Malawi is about 475 kilometres long and runs down Malawi's eastern boundary with Mozambique (Zanera, 2004, p. 1). The Shire River drains water from Lake Malawi into Zambezi River in Mozambique (p. 1).

Malawi is divided into three regions: Northern, Central and Southern. There are 28 districts in the country, six in the Northern Region, nine in the Central Region, and 13 in the Southern Region. For administration purposes, the districts are subdivided into traditional authorities (TAs) managed by chiefs. Each TA is composed of villages, which are the smallest administrative units and are supervised by village headmen.

3.10.2 History

Malawi, formerly called Nyasaland was a British protectorate from 1891 until July 1964 when the country became independent. Malawi gained republic status in 1966 and adopted a multiparty system in 1994. Following the multiparty system, Malawi has introduced poverty alleviation programmes, free primary school education, a free market economy, a bill of rights, and a parliament with three main parties. Over the past ten years, a considerable number of Malawians have migrated from rural to urban areas (Zanera, 2004, p. 1).

3.10.3 Economy

Malawi's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, was estimated in 2005 at US \$600, while the World Bank (2006) reported that Malawi's (GNI) per capita was US (\$160). In 2004, 55 per cent of the population was estimated as living below the \$1 a day poverty line (World Factbook, 2006 as cited in Williams, 2007). Malawi's economy is characterized by agriculture. In 2004, tobacco, tea, and sugar were the major exports. The Country Profile: Malawi (2007) indicates

The country is largely self-sufficient with regard to food, but due to the high cost of fertilizer, coupled with erratic rains for the past three years, Malawi is experiencing food insecurity, making it largely dependent on imported maize from South Africa. (p. 1)

Natural disasters ranged from extreme drought to heavy rainfalls putting Malawi in constant need of thousands of tonnes of food aid every year.

3.10.4 Industry

Malawi's manufacturing sector is small, but diverse. Among the products that are processed are tea, tobacco, sugar, coffee, cement and cotton. Tobacco, tea, and sugar (in order) are Malawi's main exports. Factories manufacture soap, detergents, cigarettes, furniture, cookies, bread, blankets, rugs, clothing, and mineral waters (Encyclopedia of the Nations, 2007, p. 1). Other manufacturing plants include a gin distillery, a cotton mill, and two textile plants. As well, brick making is well established, radios are assembled, roofing tiles, bicycle frames, polishes, edible fats and oils, cattle foodstuffs, flour matches, fishing nets, rope, twine and yarns, toiletries, and footwear are produced. Malawi has few exploitable resources (p. 1).

3.10.5 Population

The United Nations (2005) reported that Malawi's population had reached 12.6 million. About 90% of the population reside in rural areas, while 10% live in urban areas (p. 1). The population density increased from 85 persons per square kilometre in 1987 to 105 persons per square kilometre in 1998 (p. 2). The fertility rate of Malawians was 5.98 children per woman, and life expectancy was 41.3 years. The HIV rate of Malawians aged between 15 and 49 was 16.4 % in 1999 (Kadzamira, Swainson, Maluwa-Banda, & Kamlongera, 2001, p. 11). The Malawi government is addressing rapid population growth through the National Population Policy, which was adopted in 1994. "The

policy's objectives are to improve family planning and health care programmes, to increase school enrolment, and to increase employment opportunities, particularly in the private sector" (National Statistics Office in Malawi, 2004, p. 2).

3.10.6 Literacy in Malawi

In Malawi "literacy is defined as the ability to read and write. Close to 64% of the population in Malawi is literate. Among males, almost 76% is literate, while 52% of females are literate" (Williams, 2007, p. 19). Williams further reported that literacy is much higher at about 86% in the urban setting compared to 61% for the rural areas (p. 19). Regionally, Malawi has the highest literacy rate in the Northern Region at around 80%, followed by Central Region at 62%, and Southern Region at 61% (p. 19). The percentage of men who never attended school is only 16% and for females is 34%. The student dropout rate in Malawi was almost five per cent in 2004-2005. The reasons for dropping out of school included lack of interest, no money for fees and uniform, too old, the individual had acquired all the education they needed, marriage, pregnancy, and having to go to work (p. 29).

3.11 Description of Sites

The sites at which the research was conducted were both located in the rural areas of Chikwawa. One site was considered remote rural because it was located farther from the main road, while the other was located close to the main road and near to a rural town. To ensure anonymity of the sites, I have named one location Eastern school and the other, Southern school. I have referred to the school as cases because of their uniqueness. The geographical locations of the schools influenced the way I named them.

3.11.1 Case One: Eastern School

Eastern school is located more than five kilometers from a main road. It enrolls approximately 200 boys and 350 girls (Figure 3.3). Students from five villages feed into the school. Among the five villages, there is one female village head and four male village heads, who provide leadership in the respective villages. The school offers formal primary education from Standard One to Standard Eight. Eastern school is fortunate in being currently assisted by Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and donor agencies working collaboratively with the Malawi government to improve basic education. Assistance includes upgrading and providing classroom facilities, a school-feeding program, and a sports activities program. As well, assistance is provided for the retention of girls. The school-feeding programme contributes to girls' retention, as well as assisting children to eat healthy, so they can stay in school. Local women volunteer from the surrounding communities to prepare the food. In addition, the Food Committee, which is comprised of community members, has been advised to grow orchards and vegetable gardens, so that children might benefit from these in the future.

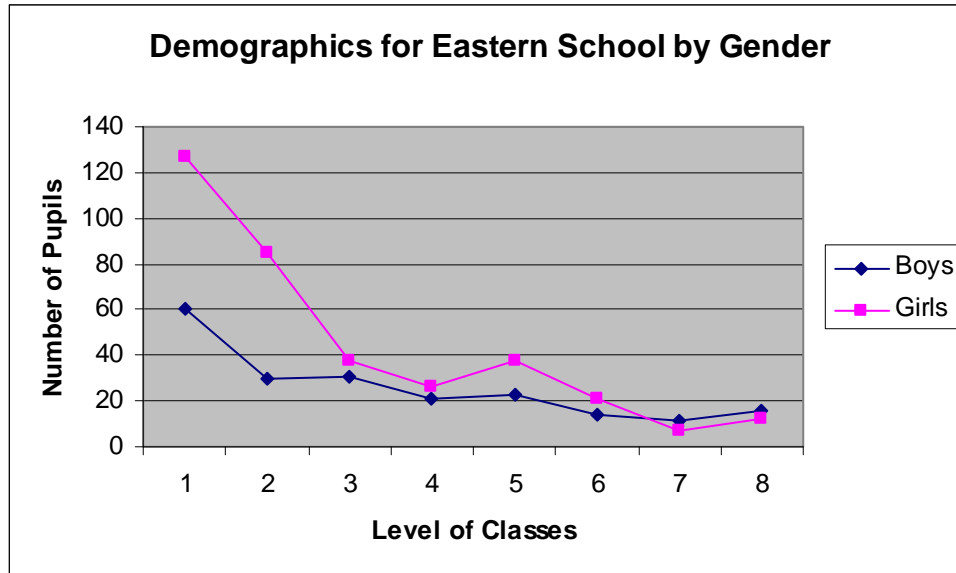


Figure 3.3 Demographics for Eastern School by Gender 2004-2005 (n=550)

Further, the World Food Programme (WFP) encourages girls to stay in school by providing additional food rations for the girls to take home at the end of each month. The head teacher of Eastern school reported,

The school has had an influx of girls from the neighbouring areas who enrolled at this school because of the food rations.

As shown in Figure 3.3, in 2004-2005, girls' enrollment was very high in Standard One, but dropped sharply by Standard Three. When I asked the head teacher why that happened, he explained that food rations were at first being given to girls who registered at the school. Later, the policy changed and girls started to receive food rations beginning in Standard Three. The justification was that girls were more vulnerable in the upper classes, as they were growing older because they had more needs than parents could meet. Apart from the general needs that all children have, such as food, soap, and a decent place to sleep, adolescent girls have a greater need for clothes

and sanitary materials. The enrollment swelled for Standard Three because girls transferred from a nearby school, which did not have the feeding programme so that they could benefit from the rations. When the policy changed, the girls went back to their school.

3.11.2 Case Two: Southern School

Southern school is a public school about half a kilometer from the main road. It enrolls approximately 550 boys and 675 girls (Figure 3.4). Students from six villages attend Southern school. The village heads comprise of two females and four men. The school offers schooling from Standard One to Standard Eight, the formal years of primary education.

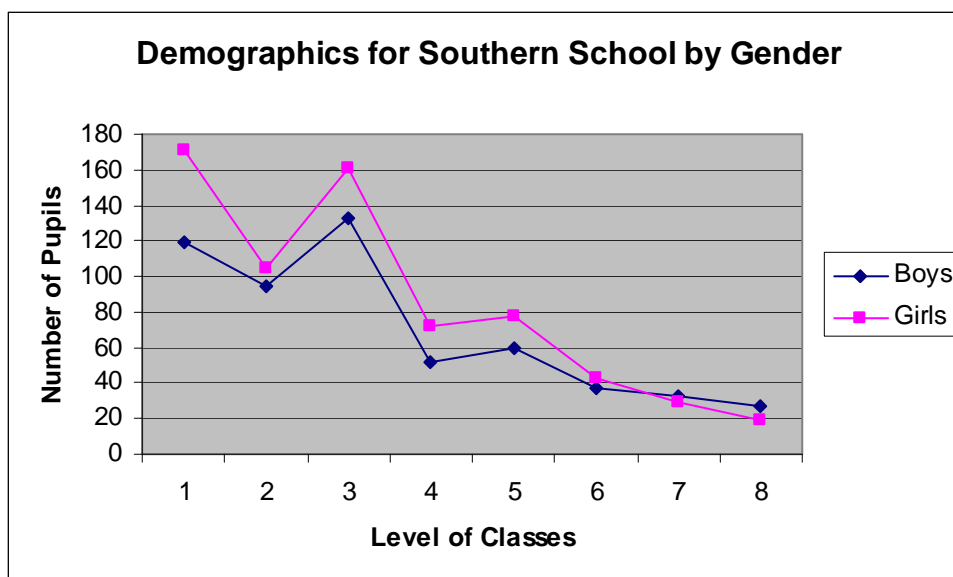


Figure 3.4 Demographics for Southern School by Gender (n=1225)

Southern school is also one of the fortunate schools, currently being assisted by NGOs and donor agencies. These are the same agencies that were assisting Eastern school.

Although the two schools are both in rural settings, there are differences such as their geographical location, number of children, staffing, accessibility to social services, and the social climate.

With reference to Figure 3.4, girls' enrollment outnumbers boys' enrollment because of the food rations that they received. When I asked the head teacher why girls' enrollment dropped after standard 6, I was told that by that time, girls had reached puberty and they experienced problems. Some of the problems that girls experienced were lack of decent clothing, pressure to date from male students and men, household duties, poor sanitary conditions at school, and uncomfortable seating arrangements such as having to sit on the floor and under trees (Figure 3.5).

A major concern in most rural schools, including Eastern and Southern, is the lack of female teachers. When I visited Southern school, I was told that there was one untrained female teacher on staff, who was employed through the parents' initiative. Since the government could not provide a trained female teacher at that time, the school committee arranged with the District Education Management to employ untrained teachers who could alleviate the heavy teaching load. At Eastern school, there were no female teachers. As well, not all teachers on staff were fully trained. Some were recruited as secondary school graduates who were trained on the job.

In order to address the problem of a lack of female teachers at Eastern and Southern schools, and other selected schools in the district, UNICEF Malawi has assisted by organizing women from the surrounding communities as support groups. The women's groups are referred to as UNICEF mothers' groups. The women's group The women's group advised girls on their academic work.



Figure 3.5 Southern School-Learning in a Temporary Grass Shelter

They reminded the students that education was a right. Students were advised to postpone marriage and pregnancy so that they could complete school. After completing their education they might better secure jobs, which would enable them to live independent lives.

3.12 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the research design, giving particular attention to case study research strategy, followed by an examination of mixed research methods. The chapter proceeded to explain sampling, criteria for judging research, processes in the study, and data analysis. In addition, the chapter presented ethical issues. Finally, the context of the study was presented.

The case study research strategy was used because the SCI study focused on two separate school communities whose dynamics were different (Huberman & Miles, 2002). In order to establish the worth of the SCI, I utilized democratic engagement of the participants. Democratic evaluation ensures that the views, interests, and values of stakeholders are well-represented (House & Howe, 1999). The mixed research included the quantitative strategy that utilized a students' self-administered questionnaire and qualitative strategy, which utilized participant observation, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, photographs, and documents. Mixed method inquiry suggests openness to other views and perceptions which results in deeper understanding of issues (Mathie & Greene, 2002).

Sampling for the SCI study was heterogeneous and engaged pupils, parents, teachers, and some community leaders. In addition, the sample was purposefully selected and differentiated by gender, age, position, and school location.

In order to ensure credibility of the data for any inquiry, researchers are advised to use reliable and valid instruments. Strategies for ensuring validity include use of multiple sources of evidence and ensuring evidence blends. To ensure reliable data, researchers should conduct inquiry as if someone was inspecting them (Yin, 1994).

The process of the study included gaining entry into Malawi's schools using the ethics approval from the University of Saskatchewan in Canada and the Ministry of Education in Malawi. A pilot study was also conducted to ensure clarity of the students' questionnaire, after which it was revised.

After collecting the data, analysis proceeded, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the closed questions of the questionnaire, while the open-ended items and interviews were analyzed manually and thematically. As well, I presented the context for the study and the description of the research sites.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to answer the questions posed in Chapter One, which were (1) What was the nature of the Sara Communication Initiative? (2) What were the perceptions of students, parents, and teachers about this programme? (3) To what extent did stakeholders perceive the social capital and capabilities of girls had been enhanced through the SCI?

4.2 Description of SCI Clubs

The Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) clubs were established in selected school communities in Malawi to act as tools to disseminate information on issues that impact girls' persistence in school. Each school nominated a teacher who coordinated the activities of the club. Both male and female students from Standard Five to Standard Eight decide if they want to be members of the SCI clubs. The clubs are mandated to disseminate the experience of Sara and later relate the issues to the experiences of girls in their communities. It is hoped that both boys and girls would benefit from the programme. Boys are encouraged to assist girls, so that they can progress together academically. In addition, to the empowerment of the SCI members, the clubs have a duty to sensitize their communities. Methods of dissemination include discussions, role-play, songs, drama, and dance. Through club activities, it is hoped that the students,

parents, and teachers will be sensitized to change their attitudes about girls receiving an education.

4.3 Demographic Data of Respondents

The questionnaire was administered to 59 students, a total from two schools named Eastern and Southern. At Eastern school, the number of students who responded to the questionnaire totaled 30, which was about 50% of the total number of participants. Girls comprised 27% (16) of the total and boys made up to 23% (14) of the total. At Southern school, there was a total of 49% (29) participants who responded to the questionnaire. The group comprised 46% (27) girls and 3% (2) boys. A comparison of the participation in the study by gender revealed that overall there were more girls who were members of the SCI compared to boys. In comparing the two schools, there were more girls participating at Southern school than at Eastern school (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1

Number of Questionnaire Respondents by School (n= 59)

School Group	Frequency	Percent
Eastern	30	50.8
Southern	29	49.2
Total	59	100.0

When I asked the SCI coordinating teachers and head teachers of Eastern and Southern schools, as to why there were fewer boys compared to girls, the coordinating teacher of Southern school stated,

It is a reflection of the membership of the clubs. Some boys believe that the SCI is a club for girls. Since the SCI is not mandatory, we can not force the boys to join the club.

Figure 4.1 has another representation of a comparison of the number of Sara recipients Eastern and Southern schools.

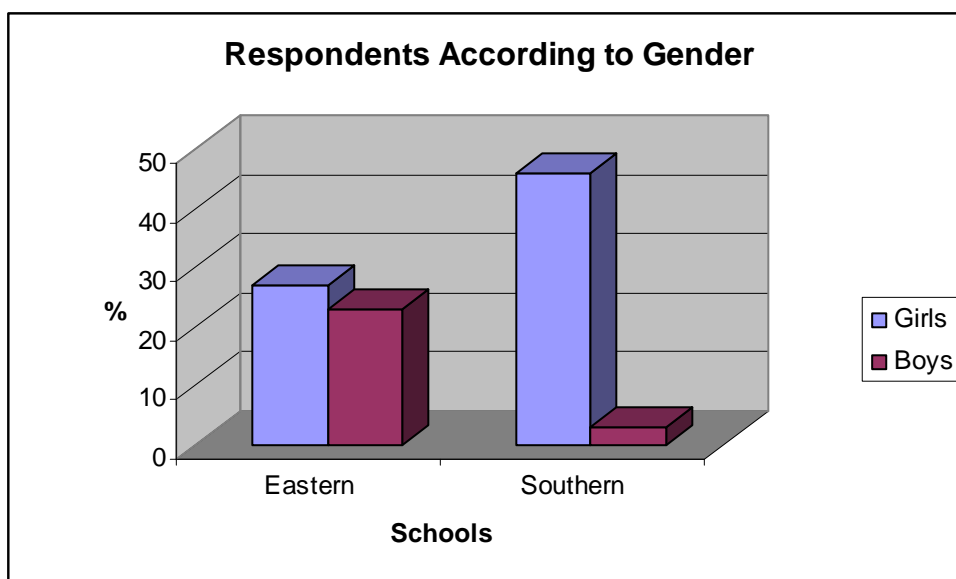


Figure 4.1 Sara Recipients (n=59)

The membership of the SCI club for Eastern school was 4 boys and 18 girls. Southern school had 1 boy and 35 girls. The mean age of the respondents was 14.2 years with a standard deviation of 3.2 years. The most common age was 14 years. The minimum age was 10 years and the maximum age was 18 years.

Table 4.2 shows that there were 59 responses. Overall, there were almost the same number of students from Standard Five and Standard Eight, 36% (21) and 37 % (22), respectively. Standard Seven had a fewer number of participants, 15% (9) and Standard 6 had the least 12% (7).

Table 4.2

Number of Questionnaire Respondents According to Class Level (n=59)

Class	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Standard 5	21	35.6	35.6
Standard 6	7	11.9	47.5
Standard 7	9	15.3	62.7
Standard 8	22	37.3	100.0
Total	59	100.0	

Analysis of the data concerning mothers' occupations for both school communities suggested that most mothers were farmers, 66% (39). Other occupations, which had lower percentage were business 19% (11), housewife 9% (5), teaching 3% (2), and nursing 3% (2). According to Figure 4.2, the breakdown of the data by school

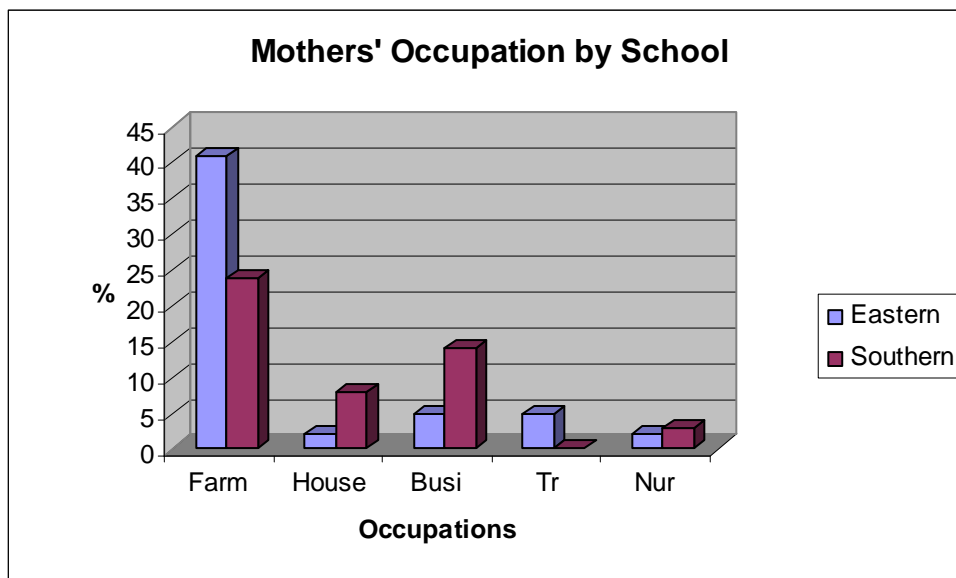


Figure 4.2 Mothers Occupations (n=59)

Abbreviations: Farm= Farmer House= Housewife Busi= Business
 Nur= Nurse Tr=Teacher

demonstrated that Southern school community mothers engaged in slightly more occupations than mothers of Eastern school community. The number of farmers was lower in Southern school community, but overall, women in both communities engaged in farming. Southern school community had more women engaged in business and housewife occupations compared to Eastern school community. Figure 4.2 shows the occupation of mothers for each school.

The mother's occupations not indicated on the questionnaire, but added by respondents were advisor, orphanage care, police, and secretary. The results on mothers' occupations were not surprising because as was pointed out earlier, both schools were located in rural areas. Although Southern school was located closer to the rural township farming land surrounded it. In Malawi's rural communities, small-scale-businesses also play a major part in the lives of women. In order to meet the basic needs of their families, women have to engage in small-scale businesses such as selling fruits, vegetables, rice, fish, eggs, live chickens, snacks and drinks, local craft and traditional beer.

Analysis of the data on fathers' occupations revealed that out of 57 responses, 49% (29) were farmers, followed by 15% (9) engaged in business, 11% (6) were chiefs, 5% (3) were teachers, and 5% (3) were medical assistants. About 12% (7) of the fathers were engaged in occupations other than those indicated in the questionnaire. The data on fathers' occupations indicated that there was more representation of farmers in the communities surrounding Eastern school compared to other occupations (Figure 4.3). Southern school, on the other hand, had the number of farmers almost matching the number of businessmen. The number of fathers who engaged in farming in Southern

school communities was slightly lower (Figure 4.3) than those who engaged in farming at Eastern school.

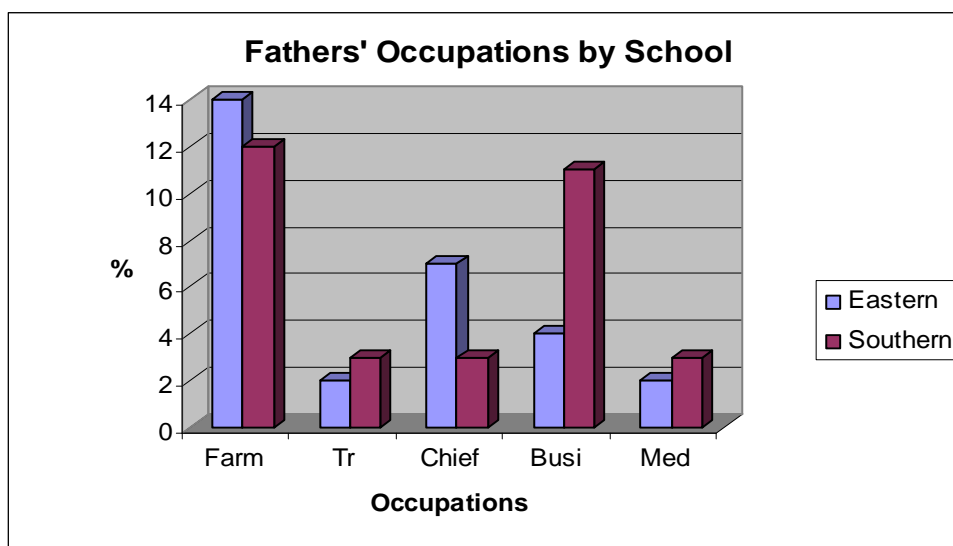


Figure 4.3 Fathers Occupations (n=57)

Key Farm= Farmer
Busi= Business

Tr= Teacher
Med= Medical Assistant

Chief= Chief

Other fathers' occupations which respondents added were policeman, assistant mechanic, builder, driver, banker, foreman, and pump attendant. Again it was not surprising that business takes second place to farming because most people in rural areas of Malawi engage in farming. With reference to Chikwawa district, it is considered to be a fertile valley and people engage in farming rice, corn, and cotton when the rains are good. Apart from using some of the farm produce for food, they sell the surplus. In addition, most families raise cattle and goats. When drought hits the area, as in 2004 to 2005, then the majority of people, who depend on the land, suffer.

In addition to the demographic information, respondents were requested to indicate the occupations they aspired to after graduating from school. Overall, an examination of

the data by school revealed that Eastern school students chose seven occupation categories, while Southern school students chose five occupation categories (Table 4.3)

Table 4.3

Career Aspirations of Students (n=57)

Occupation	n	n	n	Percent	%	%	Cumulative
	Total	Male	Female		Male	Female	Percent
Engineer	6	2	4	10.2	3.4	6.8	10.2
Farmer	2	-	2	3.4	-	3.4	14.0
Post Officer	1	1	-	1.7	1.7	-	15.8
Police Officer	28	8	20	47.5	13.6	33.9	64.9
Nurse/Doctor	12	2	10	20.3	3.4	16.9	86.0
Teacher	8	-	8	13.6	-	13.6	100.0

For both schools combined, 48% (28) of the respondents who were mostly girls aspired to be police officers, 20% (12) indicated that they wanted to be nurses/ doctors, 14% (8) teachers, and 10% (6) engineers (Table 4.3). The least preferred occupational choices were post officer 2% (1) and farmers 3% (2). The limited professional aspirations of the students were surprising to me. When I checked why most of the respondents wanted to be police officers, I was told that the police and security guards, who are employed at a nearby sugar factory, motivated the students. Most of the employees lived in the villages and communities surrounding the two schools. When I asked why most of them would not engage in farming, they indicated that there were no prospects because of the continuous drought in the area.

Since most parents have a great influence on their children, I conducted a Pearson correlation to establish if the students' choice of occupations correlated with their parents' occupations. The data analysis also revealed that there was no significant correlation (.09) at the 0.01 level (2 tailed) between mothers' occupations and children's career aspirations. As well, there was no significant correlation (.16) at the 0.01 level (2- tailed) between fathers' occupations and children's occupation choices. Although most mothers were farmers, most children did not aspire to be farmers. There were few students who made occupation choices similar to their mothers,' such as teaching and nursing. The analysis revealed that only two girls at Eastern school whose parents were both farmers aspired to be farmers as well. A girl from Southern school indicated that her father was a teacher and she too was interested in teaching. The rest of the respondents showed their interest in occupations other than their parents.' Overall, students had a limited view of professions.

Students in remote rural areas in Malawi have very limited views of professional choices because they are isolated and do not have access to modern communication such as radios, television, and newspapers. In a village setting, only a couple of families might possess a radio, implying that those who really want to hear news, need to go to a neighbour's home if they have a good relationship with the person or family. In the case of television, most residents in such places cannot afford to purchase them. Such a luxury would be available to a particular businessperson or some well to do retired person who might have decided to build a home among his/ her own people. Most rural residents do not even have access to basic services such as good roads, electricity, and telephones. Rural students, who might have relatives engaged in well paying jobs in town, have more exposure if they travel to visit them. Otherwise, most rural people are locked in their limited world, not aware of possibilities outside their own setting.

Another reason why most students might have aspired to be police officers relates to my research experiences in Malawi. There was an incident that shook the Malawi nation and might have also influenced the respondents at that time. Our current president had nominated the first female Inspector General of Police. She was considered too tough for some of the members of the former ruling party because she had been given the mandate to investigate misuse of government funds by the previous regime. The people who were implicated in the financial embezzlement were planning to vote against the Inspector General's confirmation. However, most Malawians had already experienced greater security on the streets of Malawi. Since my research was carried out during that time, one might assume that some students would aspire to work in the police department because they may have been motivated by that incident. When asked why they aspired to be police officers, the students indicated that they were motivated because of the police officers who worked at a nearby sugar factory. Most of the officers resided close to the two school communities.

4.3 The Nature of the SCI and How was it Implemented

This section presents the findings on the nature of the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI). The section is organized around the Sara story, the themes discussed at the SCI meetings, activities pupils engaged in, and the nature of Sara's problems. The issues that are discussed are based on the core problems that girls experience in their lives. The main and related problems that girls experience in Sub-Saharan Africa are included (Table 4.4)

Table 4.4

Problems experienced by the Adolescent Girl in Sub-Saharan Africa

Core Problems	Related Problems
1. HIV/AIDS and STIs	1. Poor family life education
2. Unwanted pregnancy	2. Poor psychosocial life skills
3. Early marriage	3. Lack of career options
4. Workload/Child labour	4. Lack of inheritance status
5. Sexual abuse and exploitation	5. Limited societal expectations
6. Push out from school	6. Exploitation in employment
7. Female genital cutting	7. Violence and abuse
8. Sexual initiation rites	8. Lack of economic opportunities
	9. Low access to health care

From Mackee (1996). A Role Model for Girls as they face HIV/AIDS in Africa: A Review of
The Sara Communication Initiative

As a result of this, the difficulties that girls experience were organized into themes, which were later developed into episodes in six series of comic books. The titles are *The Special Gift*, *Sara Saves Her Friend*, *The Lioness's Daughter*, *The Trap*, *Choices*, and *The Empty Compound*. The main actor in the comic books is a girl called Sara.

The Sara character was designed to capture the concept of a “positive deviant” (Blanc, A. K. 2001) as a promising behaviour model for young girls in Africa. Sara, the charismatic heroine of the series, is an adolescent girl living in peri-urban Africa. Like many girls of her age, Sara faces nearly insurmountable socio-cultural as well as economic obstacles in her desire to reach her goals in life. But her aspirations to improve herself and her community, and her quest for alternative solutions to problems, are an inspiration to anyone who encounters her. Sara's ability to negotiate and persuade, her determination never to give up—even in desperate situations makes her a dynamic role model for girls; she inspires self-esteem and models the life skills essential for empowerment. Rather than being presented as a victim, evoking pity and sympathy, Sara emphasizes girls' potential. The stories expose the issues that hinder their development and

illustrate the supportive environment, which they need to flourish. (Karnegie & Dulk, 1996-2001, pp. 7- 8)

The episode in each comic book has a moral lesson behind it. First, *The Special Gift* depicts the adventures of Sara, when one day her uncle, who is looking after his brothers' family announces that there is no money to send Sara to secondary school. Sara is shattered because she loves school and is doing well. "To make it worse, most of her family thinks that girls should stay at home to cook and clean. But with the help of her school friends and some inspiration from a book, Sara manages to change all this" (p.10). Determination and friendship enabled Sara to pursue her studies.

The second comic book, *Sara Saves her Friend*, depicts Amina, Sara's friend. Amina has lost her parents and will leave school, although she is at top of her class in mathematics. She has no money to pay school fees and other basic needs.

She plans to find a job, perhaps in the city or work at the bar where her sister, Grace, works. But the customers are men who sleep around and spread diseases like HIV/ AIDS. Amina finds herself in a dangerous situation when she goes to visit Grace, at the bar. (p. 9)

It is up to Sara to rescue her friend from the truck drivers. Sara mobilizes her friends from the village to go and rescue Amina.

The third episode is *The Trap*, where the local shopkeeper is a sugar daddy. The man "tries to trick Sara into becoming yet another of his 'girlfriends.' Sara's mother is away and so Sara cannot turn to her for help. Then her grandmother tells a story about men who turn into monsters." She realizes she has to take decisive action against the shopkeeper because he is spreading potential diseases. Sara is assisted by her friends to expose the sugar daddy's trick.

The fourth title, *The Empty Compound* depicts Sara's cousin who has died and left a wife and a baby. Sara's uncle tells everyone that his son died of cancer, although

everyone knows he died of AIDS. “The uncle starts blaming Sophia for his son’s death and banishes her from his compound. Sara is pleased when Sophia comes to stay with her family.” Although people whisper and point at Sara and Sophia when they go out together, Sara and her family are determined to show how and why it is necessary to confront prejudice and acknowledge the reality of AIDS.

The fifth episode is entitled, *Choices*. In this comic book, “Sara really likes Musa and he is more than a little attracted to her. But it seems that most boys are only interested in having sex with girls; being friends is not enough. ...” The more girls they sleep with, the more boys feel they can prove they are “men.” Sara is determined to wait. When Musa suggests sex, Sara refuses and ends the friendship. Later, Sara learns that one of her girls friends, Tamara is pregnant. She goes to see her to encourage and comfort her. Sara advises Tamara to go back to school after the baby is born.

Finally, episode number six is entitled *Daughter of a Lioness*. In this comic book, Sara has just been told that she has to be circumcised.

Sara is determined to refuse, but her grandmother is equally determined that Sara will not be a ‘whole woman’ without circumcision. Sara is aware that female genital cutting (FGC) can lead to many health problems, including an increased risk of HIV infection later in life. An adventure unfolds, taking Sara through many conflicts and nightmares. Sara uses her critical and creative thinking skills, and her recollection of a science experiment to save herself from this predicament and make the community reconsider the age-old custom. While some people are shocked by Sara’s behaviour, her mother has come round to support Sara’s position and defends her daughter’s decision.
(p. 10)

Sara’s mother had realized that some of the customs bring death and not life. She was determined to stand by her daughter.

4.3.1 The Sara Story

Specifically, I determined if the (SCI) was introduced in the selected rural primary schools, as well to provide an understanding of the activities, content, and tools of the programme. In order to determine if students knew the SCI, they were asked to indicate how they came to know the programme. Of the 59 participants, 14% (8) did not respond to this item. The analysis indicated that only 58% (34) had read something about the Sara story, 20% (12) had heard about it from friends, while about 9% (5) had seen other visual aids such as SCI posters and T-shirts. The results suggested that the most common mode of communication to the students was reading information about the programme.

The SCI National Coordinator informed me that books were a treasured commodity in Malawi schools, because they were sometimes not easily accessible and were very expensive. Some schools, which were not taking part in the SCI, contacted her office so that they too could receive comic books for their students. Although their schools were not involved with the SCI, they wanted the comic books, which are written in English for their English reading activities. It seemed T-shirts and posters might also be used in the dissemination of SCI messages; comic books were more popular and effective means because they tell the whole story. T-shirts were also a powerful tool in conveying SCI messages as observed by the head teacher of Southern school, who stated,

There is need to provide the club with more T-shirts about Sara.

T-shirts serve as a popular tool for dissemination because pupils can wear it outside of school hours and in the process people who see them might ask what the T-shirts were about. One participant of the parents' focus group also stated,

When the SCI was introduced at this school, the pupils were given T-shirts, with pictures of Sara. Some pupils are still in custody of the T-shirts. Two students who were selected to go to secondary school are still keeping their T-shirts. Actually when they went to secondary school, and wore their T-shirts they were asked by curious people to explain the story of Sara. (Female participant-Southern school focus group)

Apart from disseminating Sara messages, the new Sara T-shirts were a treasure for rural schoolgirls and schoolboys who are usually in need of decent clothes.

4.3.2 Participation of Students

In the two schools combined, of the 59 participants, 25 had participated in the Sara story for only one year, 10 for two years, nine for three years, four for four years, and eight had participated more than five years (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5

Cross tabulation on Participation in the SCI (n=59)

Sara Story	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	Greater than 4 years	Total
Seen	2	0	1	1	1	5
Listened to	6	1	1	1	3	12
Read	17	7	5	1	4	34
Total	25	8	7	3	8	51

In the category for participants who had been members of the SCI for more than 4 years, one individual claimed to have been a member for 10 years. This was a

surprising finding because the SCI was officially launched in 1998. Either the pupil made a mistake or did not understand the item. The SCI is now in its seventh year. It seemed reasonable that 25 respondents had been members of the SCI for one year because the number of participants by class indicated that 22 respondents (Table 4.5) were in standard 5, the lowest standard that was allowed to participate in SCI clubs. As well, it was not surprising that the largest number of respondents, a total of 34, were introduced to the SCI programme through reading. It would seem easier for coordinators to communicate with a larger number of students using the written text. The second category, 12 students in total, heard about the SCI. Although word of mouth might seem a common way of communicating in rural communities, it did not seem too popular with the SCI. It seemed that since the SCI was a school programme, teachers might have been more comfortable to explain it compared to students. Finally, the least number of participants had been introduced to the programme through visual representations such as comic books, posters, and T-shirts.

4.3.3 Episodes Introduced

The researcher also investigated the comic books that respondents had been introduced to. Of the six books that were listed, 41% (25) of the participants had read *Sara Saves Her Friend*, 12% (7) had read *The Trap*, 31% (18) had read *The Special Gift*, about 2% (1) had read *Choices*, and 3% (2) had read *The Lioness's Daughter*. Considering that *The Special Gift* was launched first, one would have expected this to be the most commonly read episode. Possibly, those who delivered the materials to the schools provided what was available at the distribution center. As well, students transfer to new schools often. It is possible that some students read the other episodes at other schools.

4.3.4 Meeting Times per Week

I asked staff members about how often SCI meetings were scheduled. Both the SCI coordinator of Eastern and Southern school told me that SCI meetings were scheduled four times per term, approximately once a month according to Malawi's school calendar. Each meeting lasted two hours. Both schools met once a month after school. Students, who attended, stayed the whole two hours. Some students did not attend meetings every month. Teachers kept their allocated times because there were other clubs meeting in the schools.

4.3.5 Themes Discussed at SCI Clubs

Participants were asked to indicate the themes that they had discussed at the SCI club. With reference to Table 4.6, the participants provided 55 responses.

Table 4.6

Themes Discussed at the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) Clubs (n=55)

Themes	<i>n</i>	%
Push-out (forced out from school)	23	49
Unwanted pregnancy	16	27
HIV/AIDS	10	17
Child labour	2	3
Early marriage	2	3
Sexual abuse and exploitation	2	3
Total	55	100

The highest number of responses was on “push-out” (forced) from school indicated by 29% (23). The second highest theme to be discussed was unwanted pregnancy indicated by 27% (16) of the participants. The third highest topic of discussion was HIV/AIDS,

referred to by 17% (10). The other themes discussed were early marriage 3% (2), sexual abuse and exploitation 3% (2), and child labour 3% (2). Other issues that were indicated by the students included avoiding sex, continuing school, falling in love with teachers, being forced to drop out of school, harassment, and heavy work assigned to young people.

The list of the topics discussed at the SCI clubs was not surprising considering the comments that some students made on the open-ended item of the questionnaire:

Gender discrimination is a real issue. Girls experience many things such as being forced to marry early, sometimes being forced to drop out of school so that we can work in the garden or carry water. Boys are also pressured to marry early so they can bring someone home to assist with the chores at home or in the garden. When girls refuse to get married, they are told to leave home. Such tendencies destroy an individual's future. (A Standard 8 girl from Southern school)

Another girl said:

The issue which I want to report is that girls experience gender discrimination in different ways, such as sexual harassment, too much manual work at a young age, working more than boys, being forced to marry early, leading to dropout from school. When boys and young men propose to a girl and she refuses because she wants to continue schooling, they tell her that school will never do her any good and in the end they sexually harass her. (A Standard 8 girl from Eastern school).

A third girl explained,

In SCI club, we learn how to avoid HIV/AIDS, as well as avoiding early pregnancies. We are advised not to ask boys/men for money because you may be asked to pay back with sexual favours. You are trapped when you receive money from men or boys. Sometimes they come to you and threaten to beat you up if you refuse them. You may end up by giving in to them for fear of being beaten. In the process, you contract AIDS or you become pregnant.

(A Standard 6 girl from Southern school)

Table 4.6 shows that the most discussed topics in the SCI were push-out from school 39% (23) and unwanted pregnancies 27% (16). Push-out-from school is a term that UNICEF coined to describe challenges that contribute to forcing girls out of school before completion of their schooling. While all the themes that were discussed are critical for student survival in school, some situations seem more serious. For example, it seems that being forced out of school is a painful experience for students, whether because parents cannot afford school fees or because they want the child to marry early.

During the data collection in the two schools, I witnessed first hand a situation where a girl reported that her parents were forcing her to quit school. The first incident took place at Southern school. It was the day I planned to conduct the parents' focus group and we were waiting for other participants to arrive, when I saw a girl crying and approaching one of the women who was a member of UNICEF mothers' group. The lady took the girl aside to check what was wrong. When the woman came back, I asked her what was wrong with the girl. She told me,

The girl lived with her father and stepmother. Several times the step-mother had reported to the husband that the daughter was rude and lazy. The father told the girl that he would not pay for the examination fees which were required to enable her to write Standard Eight (equivalent of Grade 8) examinations. He told her that he would be sending her away to her birth mother who was living in a remote rural village. It is a sad situation because if that happens, the girl has no future. Standard Eight examinations will be written in a month's time. This is her chance to a brighter future. (A member of the UNICEF Womens' Group at Southern School)

When she had finished narrating the incident, I asked her what the Womens' Group would do. She told me that three members of the group, including her, would go to meet the parents to hear their side of the story and try to reason with them on behalf of the girl.

A similar incident took place at Eastern school. The day I visited Eastern school to collect data from the students and the parents, I was told that I should meet two girls who had previously been members of the first SCI club. When I asked then how they were doing, they answered,

We both attend the community day secondary school, but we have a problem with school fees. Since we failed some subjects, we would like to repeat Form II (equivalent of Grade 10), but our parents have told us that they can not afford to pay the second time. We are desperate to write our examinations.

I asked one teacher at Eastern School why girls repeated in school, and he stated,

In this community, girls repeat classes for reasons such as unwanted pregnancies, lack of study time due to too many home chores, lack of school fees, lack of decent clothes, absence of role models, and rarely lack of interest.

4.3.6 Introduction to SCI

In order for a programme to be effective, there needs to be proper introduction. When asked to indicate how students were introduced to the SCI, of the 59 participants 56 responded to this item. About 43% (25) of the respondents indicated that their teachers informed them, followed by 34% (20) who indicated that their friends told them about the programme. The third category, which consisted of approximately 19% (11), indicated that their parents told them about the SCI. It was not surprising that respondents allocated higher percentages to teachers and fellow students as disseminators of the SCI information because SCI was a school activity. The parents constituted a lower percentage as informants because most parents in Malawi's rural schools are not involved in the academic activities of their children. The few parents who informed their children about SCI might have attended the orientation from the national coordinator of the SCI in Malawi. A member of the UNICEF Women's Group revealed this as the case:

A lady from Blantyre came to explain to us about the SCI, as members of the women's group. There were 10 of us. She promised to teach the girls as well. She used materials such as posters that were labelled, "Do Not Deny Your Children a Good Future." (Eastern School Focus Group)

Although a group of parents were oriented to the SCI programme by the coordinator, they were not able to disseminate the information to a larger group because of a lack of

resources. The parents also indicated that the coordinator had promised to take them to a second level of orientation, which never materialized.

4.3.7 Sharing Sara's Story

Since the purpose of the SCI was to sensitize the communities, it was expected that after the introduction, students would be free to discuss the programme with parents, siblings, friends, and relatives. Of the 52 students who responded, approximately 68% (40) said they had told the story to their family and 20% (12) said they had not. Further analysis was carried out to check if telling the story of Sara to their family correlated with the number of people who occupied the home. There was a low and not statistically significant correlation (-.08) between telling the story of Sara and the number of occupants in the homes. I was also interested to find out if there was any correlation between telling the Sara story and the gender of the respondents. The analysis revealed that there was low and not statistically significant correlation (-.09) between telling the story of Sara and the gender of the students.

In addition, the researcher wanted to know whether students believed that girls had more opportunities to complete their education after the SCI was introduced. Of the 37 student responses, 68% indicated that they believed girls had more opportunities to advance in school than before the introduction of the SCI, while 12% (7) of the respondents indicated that they did not believe the SCI had increased opportunities for girls to stay in school, and only 5% (3) indicated that they did not know. In addition, a parents-focus group member stated,

The introduction of the SCI to our community has enabled girls and boys to enjoy school. Girls are working very hard as well as boys. There is no difference. In the past, girls were left behind. Only boys were encouraged to go to school. At

present, we can see improvement because both boys and girls are going ahead.

(Female participant- Southern School Parent Focus Group)

It is wonderful to know that gender sensitization has ensured the realization of girls' rights to education. (Male participant- Southern School Parent Focus Group)

It does not seem surprising that 68% of the respondents indicated that they told the story of Sara to their family members because it is a very entertaining series. As well, storytelling is a vibrant cultural tradition in Malawi's rural communities.

Table 4.7

Activities Students engage in During SCI Meetings (n=55)

Activities	<i>n</i>	%
Discussions	35	59
Singing	10	17
Drama	9	15
Other	1	2
Total	55	100

4.3.8 Activities during SCI Meetings

When students meet at SCI clubs, they engage in different activities that enable them to understand the episodes in the Sara comic books and then apply them to their own lives. Students were asked to indicate the activities that they engaged in during SCI meetings. There were 55 responses in total. As indicated in Table 4.7, 59% (35) of the respondents referred to discussion as the activity they mostly engaged in at the SCI

meetings. The next most popular activity was singing 17% (10), followed by drama 15% (9), and 2% (1) indicated other activities. Perhaps discussion featured highly compared to singing and drama because less preparation is required, whereas singing and drama require more preparation and organization. Although composing songs might be a task, it is a cultural endowment for Malawians to sing. Most cultural activities include music. In addition, drama has become an effective tool in the dissemination of messages on AIDS, gender, and population issues at the national level.

4.3.9 Tools for the SCI

In order to ensure effective dissemination of the SCI, the initiators of the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) developed materials that would captivate the interest of their audiences. When asked to indicate the materials that the SCI coordinators used in the schools, out of 53 responses, 70% (41) indicated that they used comic books. The rest of the items had less than 10 responses, for example, use of audiotapes comprised 9% (5), charts comprised 7% (4) and videotape comprised 5% (3). The number of responses for each item seems reasonable in the Malawi context. Most students treasure comic books and reading because books are very expensive in Malawi. Students who are members of the SCI can borrow books from the club and share them with their friends and relatives. It was not surprising that only 9% of the respondents referred to audiotapes as one of the SCI tools because it is difficult for schools to secure tape-recorders. The rest of the items, such as videotapes and charts indicated lower percentages because these materials might not be readily available to the different schools, although the SCI coordinator indicated that they had videotapes on Sara.

4.3.10 Sara's Challenges

Rural girls in Malawi face many challenges. To ensure that students recognize girls' problems in the two school communities, they were asked to identify Sara's dilemmas (Table 4.8). Of the dilemmas that students responded to, the items with the largest percentages were: Works too hard at home 46% (27), she has been told by her uncle to leave school 31% (18), no one helps her with school work at home 2% (1), and Sara is pregnant 12% (7).

Table 4.8

Sara's Challenges (n=64)

Challenges	<i>n</i>	%
Works too hard at home	27	46
Told to leave school	18	31
Sara is pregnant	7	12
No one helps her with school work at home	1	2
Other	1	2
Total	54	96

However, Sara was not pregnant. This item was a detractor, a way of finding out if students knew the details of the story. The issues that students were free to add in the category of other and were somewhat related to Sara included: Sara was continuing her education, she was proposed to by men, and she was about to be raped. The item that was not related to Sara at all was that she was an orphan. Sara's problems that the respondents included in the 'other' category were that she was proposed to by men, she

was an orphan, and that she was about to be raped. Although some of the problems might be close to the answers, the fact that she was an orphan was not true. It seems students were confusing this fact with the other episodes.

4.4.11 Girls' Problems within Eastern and Southern School Communities

Although the SCI episodes were written in an entertainment mode, the main purpose was to communicate to stakeholders actual issues that take place in the students' communities.

Table 4.9

Problems Experienced by the Adolescent Girls in the Selected Schools (n=75)

Problems	<i>n</i>	%
Unwanted pregnancies	33	44
Early marriages	19	25
Dropping out of school early	8	11
HIV/AIDS/STDs	7	9
Overwork (too much manual work)	4	5
Rape	4	5
Total	75	99

After reading, hearing, or seeing pictures of the story, it was expected that recipients of the programme might be able to recognize similar challenges in their communities. When asked to identify the problems girls experienced, the issues that featured most prominently by respondents were unwanted pregnancies 44% (33). The second highest was early marriages 25% (19), followed by dropping out of school 11% (8), and

HIV/AIDS 9% (7). Other problems, with lesser frequencies identified were over worked (too much manual work) 5% (4) and rape 5% (4) (Table 4.9). Other problems that the students identified included girls being despised by parents and the lack of school fees. While it might seem that most students admitted that girls have problems, some boys had different opinions on some of the girls' concerns. On the issue of problems experienced by girls, one boy stated,

When girls are harassed sexually by boys or teachers they become pregnant before completing their education. Girls do well in school because they work more than boys do. (Male student from Eastern School)

A second respondent from Eastern school stated,

The comment that I have concerning SCI is to encourage my friends about HIV/AIDS because this epidemic is claiming many lives among the youth. I also want to add that gender discrimination exists at our school. Sometimes boys are assigned manual work, while girls are not. When we ask our teacher how come girls are exempted, the teacher whips us or does not allow us to go in class. Sometimes we are assigned more manual work. (Male student from Eastern School).

A girl from Southern school indicated

Sometimes, whether at home or school several of us might be assigned a particular chore, but before we finish, one of us is asked to stop working so that the others continue working. Those of us who are asked to continue on the task become despondent.

A boy from Eastern school reported

There is more discrimination here, at school because there are teachers who are after girls. Boys are discriminated in the following ways being assigned physical work when you did nothing wrong so that if you were talking to a girl concerning issues of youth you should leave the place so that the teacher can stay to talk to the girl. After the work, you might hear that the teacher proposed to the girl and she has accepted or refused. In some cases she is harassed sexually.

In this section, I analyzed data from question one, which focused on examining the nature of the SCI. The following section will present the findings from question two.

4.5 Perspectives of Stakeholders Concerning Girls Problems

The purpose of this section was to analyze the responses that were given by students and parents concerning the problems that girls experienced in the selected school communities. The issues that were analyzed included gender discrimination, HIV/ AIDS & STIs, overwork, and push out from school. The data came from students' questionnaires and focus group interviews, as well as from the parents' focus group interviews.

In order to determine if students were aware of gender discrimination they were asked to indicate whether they had heard about it or not. Of the 59 student participants, 57% (34) indicated they had heard about gender discrimination and 43% (25) had not heard about gender discrimination. The second part of the item requested respondents to demonstrate ways girls were discriminated against. Of the 59 student participants, (58%) 34 responded. The item that received the highest response was teachers impregnating

girls 30% (10). The second highest percentage 24% (8) indicated that girls were discriminated when male teacher and boys bullied them. Thirdly, it was suggested that

Table 4.10

Students' Perception of Gender Discrimination (n=35)

Gender Discrimination	n	%
Teachers impregnating girls	10	30
Boys and male teachers bully girls	8	24
Overworking girls more than boys	7	21
Boys are favoured more than girls in allocation of resources	4	12
Girls are abused verbally	4	12
Other	2	1
Total	35	100

girls were usually overworked compared to boys 21% (7). Items, which were referred to, but received minimal responses, included boys being favoured more than girls in the allocation of resources at home/school 12% (14), and girls being abused verbally 12% (4) (Table 4.10). Other additions by students included girls being forced to marry and girls being beaten by boys and men 3% (2)

Apart from identifying gender discrimination items, respondents were asked if some girls in their communities experienced gender discrimination before the SCI was introduced in their schools. Of the 30 responses, 70% indicated that some girls had experienced gender discrimination before the SCI was introduced in their schools, while 27% pointed out that girls did not experience gender discrimination. Only 3% stated that

they did not know. The second part of the item requested respondents to demonstrate ways by which girls were discriminated against at home or school.

4.5.1 Gender Discrimination at Home before the SCI

Of the 42 respondents, 31% (13) indicated that girls were generally overworked compared to boys (Table 4.11). The second highest number, 21% (9) indicated that girls were denied time for play.

Table 4.11

Gender Discrimination at Home before the SCI (n=42)

Gender Discrimination	<i>n</i>	%
Worked more than boys	13	31
Denied play	9	21
Abused verbally	7	17
Abused sexually	5	12
Forced to marry early	2	5
Forced to drop out of school	5	12
Other	1	2
Total	42	100

Thirdly, 17% (7) of respondents expressed that girls were verbally abused Other issues that were raised included sexual abuses 12% (5), being forced to drop out of school 12% (5), and being forced to marry early 5% (2).

4.5.2 Gender Discrimination at School before the SCI

When respondents were asked to point out whether girls were discriminated against at school, a total of 38 out of 59 participants responded.

Table 4.12

Gender Discrimination at school before the SCI (n=38)

Gender Discrimination	<i>n</i>	%
Girls worked more than boys	5	13
Teased by teachers and boys	6	16
Exploited by teachers, doing chores in teachers' homes	6	16
Sexually abused by male teachers and boys	12	32
Not given equal chance to participate in class	8	21
Other	1	2
Total	38	100

Participants allocated the highest number of responses to sexual abuses of girls by male teachers and boys 32% (12) leading to pregnancy. The second item to receive a high number of responses was that girls were not given adequate opportunities to participate in class activities 21% (8). Other issues raised were that teachers and boys teased girls 16% (6); girls were overworked compared to boys 13% (5); teachers exploited girls for example, by asking them to do chores in their homes 16% (6); and boys proposed to girls (Table 4.12). The issue of male teachers and boys teasing girls has been longstanding in many schools in Malawi.

4.5.3 Gender Discrimination at Home after the SCI

Of the 30 respondents, 87% (26) expressed that gender discrimination was still experienced by some girls. Only 10% (3) indicated that there was no discrimination and 3% (1) did not know whether there was any discrimination (Table 4.13) The second part of the item asked the respondents to specify the type of discrimination that girls experienced at home or at school.

Table 4.13

Gender Discrimination Girls Experience at Home, after the SCI (n=33)

Gender Discrimination	<i>n</i>	%
Worked more than boys	15	46
Abused verbally	4	12
Abused sexually	4	12
Forced to marry early	3	9
Forced to drop out of school	2	6
Other	5	15
Total	33	100

The discriminatory tendency that had the highest percentage was that girls worked more than boys at home 46% (15), followed by verbal abuse 12% (4), and sexual abuse 12% (4). Before the SCI, data indicated that girls worked more than boys. It seems that the SCI has not helped in alleviating the burden of work overload for girls because 13% of the respondents indicated that before the SCI girls worked more than boys (Table 4.11). After the SCI, the percentage of respondents was 46%. It is surprising

that there is such a wide difference. May be pupils are being more observant or there are more social pressures for mothers to use their daughter's services.

Although the data indicated that girls were overworked compared to boys, it was not the opinion of all respondents. One boy had this to say concerning being overworked:

My comment is that girls are favoured at home as well as at school because they are given smaller chores compared to boys. Girls are privileged at school to ensure that they pass their examinations. At home they are favoured by being given only the smaller tasks, such as cooking and drawing water. Boys on the other hand are expected to do chores such as hoeing, digging pit latrines (out houses), as well as washing clothes. Boys are assigned heavier chores than girls.

(Male student from Eastern school)

The claim that girls were overworked compared to boys or that boys were overworked more than girls is not easily resolved. Perhaps there was need to have a breakdown of the hours spent digging pit latrines versus those spent carrying water to determine which chore was more laborious.

4.5.4 Gender Discrimination Girls Experience at School after the SCI

Participants were also requested to indicate whether girls were discriminated against at school after the introduction of SCI (Table 4.14).

With reference to the school setting, the data indicated 29% (9) students believed that teachers assigned heavier workload for girls. Rural school chores for girls might include drawing water for all students to drink, sweeping classrooms, and cleaning toilets. Because of the division of labour by gender that is practiced in the homes, some

teachers perpetuate the same practices when assigning duties at school. Schools in Malawi cannot afford janitors, so pupils are responsible for most of the chores at school.

Table 4.14

Gender Discrimination Girls Experience at School, after SCI (n=32)

Gender Discrimination	n	%
Worked more than boys	9	29
Teased by teachers and boys	6	19
Exploited by teachers e.g. doing chores in teachers homes	5	16
Sexually harassed by male teachers and boys	5	16
Not given equal chance to participate in class	5	16
Other	2	4
Total	32	100

Since some chores are considered feminine, such as drawing water and sweeping, in some schools, girls have ended up doing more than boys. The implications for schools are that girls are usually too tired to concentrate in school because they usually do similar chores at home before going to school. Some girls continue with such chores after school, leaving no room for any rest. As listed in Table 4.14, some girls were assigned chores at teachers' homes 16% (5) such as sweeping homes, drawing water, and cooking for them. As well, a second major concern for girls was teasing by male teachers and boys 19% (6). Other concerns included sexual harassment 16% (5), and unequal opportunity to participate in class 16% (5). Although the data might

indicate that girls were generally discriminated against, one participant said the following:

My comment is that at Eastern school there is no one who can claim that she or he was dismissed from school because she is a boy or girl. Teachers at this school are very systematic because they do not discriminate by gender. (Male student respondent from Eastern school)

Although sexual harassment and bullying of girls was considered an offence within the two school communities research by Chimombo, et al. (2000) revealed that the girls in a particular district in Malawi seemed to expect such treatment from boys and did not complain. There was a belief among communities that sexual harassment and bullying was a sign of love for a prospective lover or wife.

4.6 Stakeholders Perceptions of the Social Capital and Capabilities

This section presents the perspectives of parents, students, and teachers on some of the issues, which were examined through focus groups and structured interviews. This section will be presented using the concepts of the capabilities and social capital models. Capability refers to what people are actually able to do and to be (Nussbaum, 2001). The social capital argument is that individuals can be deprived of basic abilities as reflected by premature mortality, significant undernourishment (especially of children), persistent morbidity, and widespread illiteracy, among others (Sen, 1999). The capabilities concepts include the physical capability, economic capability, mental capability, political capability, care capability, and social capability.

4.6.1 Physical Capability

The term physical capability refers to people's nutrition status, reproductive health, and bodily safety. Women and girls' problems that relate to deprivation of physical capabilities can be associated with high death rates due to poor nutrition, poor reproductive health, and domestic violence against women and girls. Before conducting the pupils focus group at Southern School, the participants sang the following song:

Ta-la-la-la, do not be left behind

We SCI members are teaching others to fight HIV/AIDS

Let us continue to fight AIDS

Ta-la-la-la into the future

Ta-la-la-la do not be left behind

Ta-la-la-la do not let sugar daddies get to you

Ta-la-la-la deny them

Ta-la-la-la do not be left behind

(Southern School Students Focus Group)

The issues examined in this section included gender discrimination, work overload, HIV/ AIDS, and push-out from school. The issues presented in this section seemed to invade the development of the basic (physical and care capabilities) and internal (mental and social capabilities) of students.

4.6.1.1 Gender discrimination

Since some of the major issues that pupils responded to were based on gender issues, I decided to probe the subject further. During the focus group, the moderator asked pupils the nature of gender discrimination which girls experienced. Spontaneous answers were given by individual participants raising hands and giving responses such as girls are abused through grabbing their clothes, verbal abuses, sexual harassment/

rape, heavy workload, beating, over punishing when they did wrong, verbal abuse, teasing/ridicule, and proposing to them. When asked if they knew students, who had been abused, the participants indicated that they knew some girls who had been abused. The focus group moderator further probed to find out what was done to assist the girls who were abused. The participants explained that the victimizers were reported to parents, teachers, the school committee, the village chief, and the school chairperson. The moderator asked the participants to explain what they would do as SCI clubs members to ensure that abuses, which happened in the past, were not repeated. Respondents from both Eastern and Southern focus groups suggested that in order to minimize unfortunate incidences they would:

- *Advise girls not to use shortcuts when going places*
- *Convince girls not to walk along sugar plantations*
- *Encourage girls not to walk in the dark alone*
- *Report the victimizer to the police, head teacher, and parents*
- *Ask elders in the community to discuss additional ways of addressing the situation.*

In addition to discussing the abuse of girls, participants were asked to indicate if boys were also abused. Most students believed that boys too could be abused. Some of the abuses that boys experienced included heavy punishment when they did wrong, beating, name calling, snatching their clothes, and assigning heavy workload.

Parents made an observation on early marriages and pointed out that some girls got married early because there was inadequate security in the communities to keep them from men and boys after puberty. Parents felt that sometimes marriage was better than promiscuity. As well, they were aware that although marriage might appear as

security, early marriage became a problem for the girl child. Participants indicated that it was true! (Women clapped and ululated).

4.6.1.2 Heavy workload

After determining from the questionnaire responses that heavy workload was an issue for most participants, I decided to probe the issue further. First, I asked boys and girls to give me two lists indicating the activities they engaged in from morning to evening, according to gender. Examining the list in Table 4.15 confirmed the questionnaire results, whereby participants indicated that girls did more chores than boys. When asked why girls worked more than boys, the following were the responses given by girls:

- *Most chores are traditionally done by girls*
- *Girls stay at home most of the time*
- *Boys run away from chores*

Table 4.15

Activities Girls and Boys Engage in Everyday (Eastern and Southern Schools)

Girls	Boys
<i>Looking after babies</i>	<i>Harvesting</i>
<i>Cooking</i>	<i>Sweeping</i>
<i>Sweeping and mopping the floor</i>	<i>Building fences</i>
<i>Fetching water</i>	<i>Playing soccer</i>
<i>Going to the market</i>	
<i>Fetching firewood</i>	
<i>Bathing babies</i>	
<i>Playing</i>	
<i>Reading</i>	

One boy pointed out that girls do most of the chores because the particular chores are supposed to be done by girls. Some chores that both girls and boys did, included washing clothes, washing dishes, working in the garden, chopping firewood, and going to the maize mill. Table 4.15 displays the chores that were specific to girls and boys.

After discussing the workload participants engaged in, students were asked to suggest solutions to the inequity in chore allocation at home. Participants pointed out that it would be necessary to discuss allocation of duties with their parents. Others suggested that they would help their sisters and some girls indicated that they would help their brothers complete chores when the need arose. In a comment that combined work overload and reproductive health one girl stated,

My comment is that, at home we are discriminated when parents allocate more work to us than boys. I also want to say that early pregnancy causes complications during birthing and many girls die as a result. It is true that we have read Sara's story and we have understood. We are glad because we know the implications for early pregnancy. (Girl from Southern School)

4.6.1.3 HIV/AIDS

One of the issues that participants indicated they discussed at SCI meetings was the Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS). The purpose of the discussion was to find out if students were aware of the nature of HIV/AIDS and what action they were taking to make a difference in their communities. At both focus group discussions, the participants were able to define the acronym for HIV/AIDS. In addition, students were requested to list HIV/ AIDS signs and symptoms and they came up with, for example, persistent diarrhoea, vomiting,

coughing, loss of weight, general malaise, and shingles. The participants were also asked to imagine a scenario where they lived close to a person suffering from HIV/AIDS and what they could do to assist. The following was listed by the two focus groups combined: Ways of Assisting HIV/AIDS Patients

- *Visitations*
- *Escorting them to the hospital*
- *Cooking for them*
- *Eating with them*
- *Washing and ironing their clothes*
- *Drawing water*
- *Giving baths*
- *Carrying them*
- *Escorting them to church*
- *Encouraging them*
- *Advising them*

After listing the signs and symptoms, participants were asked to list behaviours that would contribute to the contracting of HIV/AIDS within their communities. The following list was generated from the two students' focus groups:

- *Sharing toothbrushes, razor blades, needles, safety pins*
- *Promiscuity (between adolescent girls and adult men)*
- *Promiscuity (between a widow and her male in-laws)*

To ensure that students understood the behaviours that were listed, they were asked to explain how the process of contracting the virus took place. One girl explained the following concerning how sharing a toothbrush can spread HIV/AIDS:

If someone is infected and uses a toothbrush, which causes bleeding in the mouth, if another person uses the same toothbrush and gets in contact with the blood from the first user, he/she can contract the virus.

One boy had this to say about sharing the use of a razor blade:

If you use a razor blade and you cut yourself, if someone uses the same razor and also cuts him/herself the blood exposure can infect the second person if the first one was infected with the virus.

Finally, students were asked how the SCI members could assist to change the behaviours that contributed to HIV/AIDS infection. Participants suggested that in order to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS, people should be advised not to:

1. *Share toothbrushes, razor blades, needles.*
2. *Be promiscuous.*
3. *Have multiple sexual partners*
4. *Accept some of the traditional customs, such as kulowa kufa and kusansa fumbi.*

Kulowa kufa, which literally translated means *replacing the dead husband* is a custom “where a widow is made to have sex with a deceased husband’s brother or other male relatives so as to please the spirits of the dead or ‘cleanse’ the woman” (Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation-CHRR, 2004, pp.13). *Kusansa fumbi* literally translated means *shaking the dust* and is an initiation ceremony where young girls, 10 or

11 years old are taken off to a separate hut in a corner of the village, and visited by several men who have sex with them. While initiation ceremonies have positive aspects that are taught to the youth, practices like kusansa fumbi, or what others call fisi (hyena) have detrimental results for the young girls, especially if they are forced and the men involved have HIV/AIDS.

I asked the moderator of the focus groups to elaborate on the system of separating the girls from the family during puberty. The moderator explained,

The hut that girls are assigned outside the home is called a gowelo. The major aspects being introduced with the gowelo system are adulthood, sexual maturity, and anticipated uncleanness. Girls live separately so that they can use their own utensils and not endanger their fathers. Traditionally it is believed that if a girl who has begun to menstruate cooks food for her parents and adds salt to it, her father will sicken and die. People here also believe that the father can die if the daughter becomes pregnant and aborts and he unintentionally eats salt in the food she has prepared. Besides the discriminatory nature of the gowelo system, girls have too much freedom. They sometimes go out at night to meet boys. Parents are traditionally not supposed to interfere in the activities of the gowelo, though mothers may inspect the girls occasionally during the day. (The Focus Group Moderator)

When participants were asked what they would do at the individual level to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, they repeated the same responses that they had suggested for their communities, but added that working hard in school might be a solution for keeping out of trouble. This observation might be true for Malawi because boys and men usually have much freedom to be outside the home than women and girls. The negative aspect

of such behaviours is that sometimes they adopt strange values, which lead them to engage in risky behaviours. The result is that women and girls, who are usually confined to the home, suffer the consequences. Strange values might be contracting AIDS through promiscuity, over drinking and finishing all the financial resources that the family needs for survival.

Coordinating teachers indicated that girls have problems at the school pertaining to lack of adequate and sometimes decent physical facilities. The coordinating teachers reiterated that both schools lacked adequate toilets and this was a drawback for adolescent girls, who at this age were very self-conscious and needed much more privacy when they started menses. At the class level, some students had difficulties seating on the floor or ground due to inadequate desks.

4.6.2 Economic Capability

Economic capability refers to the ability of an individual to acquire income. FAWE (1996) reported that in some societies, female members of society are economically deprived because there is a difference between women's and men's access to exert power over economic issues. In this study, economic issues were evident because parents could not access money to meet the needs of their children.

4.6.2.1 Push out from school

As explained earlier, push-out from school is a term that UNICEF uses to define the issues that prevent girls from surviving in schools in most developing countries. When participants of Eastern and Southern focus groups were asked to list the reasons why some students left school before completing their studies, they indicated that some students, especially girls, left school due to pregnancies, love of money, lack of decent

clothes, and forced marriages. When the moderator of the focus group probed further to find out why girls got pregnant before completing school, participants indicated,

Most girls desire material things. Some girls got pregnant out of a financial need. Other girls lack basic needs such as soap. Others are raped or enticed by men or boys on their way to and from school.

When asked how many girls had left school that year due to pregnancies, it was found that five girls (1.4%) of 348 girls from Eastern school had left school, while seven girls (1%) of 676 girls from Southern school had left school. Considering that five is a large number of girls to leave school in one year, the moderator asked the participants what they would do as members of the SCI to ensure that more girls and boys stayed in school. The participants gave the following responses:

- *Buying them clothes*
- *Buying them soap*
- *Encouraging them to go to school*
- *Sharing food*
- *Buying them exercise books*
- *Lending them writing materials*
- *Advising them.*

While it seemed that parents were not doing enough to provide for their children, one parent explained,

Girls experience many problems here at Eastern school because it is difficult for fathers to engage in businesses that can generate money to help their families. In addition, there is too much sunshine and heat, so that people cannot engage in meaningful farming. (Women clapped and ululated-Eastern school focus group)

Southern school focus group participants also raised the issue and indicated that for a couple of years drought had hit much of the district so that most people who depended on the land for their income were not able to produce adequate cash crops. The persistent needy situation at the household level seemed to be one of the reasons why girls did not stay in school. External agencies came to the rescue of some of the communities and made agreements to provide one meal for both girls and boys at the school and give girls food rations of beans and cornmeal once a month, which they could take home.

4.6.3 Mental Capability

Mental capability refers to the ability to cultivate human traits of imagination, senses, and thought, through adequate education that equips the individual with literacy skills and scientific training (Nussbaum, 2001). Concerning the importance of girls' education, a male member of the parents' focus group pointed out,

Parents need to educate girls because they are the ones mostly lagging behind. Although the efforts are there to educate girls, they still experience problems such as sexual harassment. When girls experience such problems on their way to school or on their way home from school, they sometimes leave school. Parents may try to force them to continue schooling, but that does not help

(Male Member Eastern School Parents Focus Group).

When you educate a girl, you benefit as a parent because one day the daughter will be able to help you. When a child is not educated, there is no way whereby he or she can find a job. (Southern School Parents Focus Group)

This observation echoed a comment that was made by one rural mother in another district in Malawi, who lamented,

There are so many pupils who have left school in our village and as a result they miss out on opportunities when development projects come to their village. Most young men and women are not able to read or write and, as such, they can not even be employed to do better jobs, such as storekeeping and looking after hoes and other equipment when development projects come to our area.

When parents were asked whether boys and girls should be given equal opportunity to attend school, parents indicated with an emphatic yes! They believed that both genders needed to be given equal opportunity to advance in life. No one should be left behind. (Women ululated in agreement). To demonstrate support for the education on girls, one parent stated,

We went into villages to look for children, especially girls asking them why they were failing to go to school. Some of them would tell us, “I have a baby.” We encouraged them to leave their babies with their mothers and go back to school. Due to that programme, two girls in the village have gone back to school.

(Female Parent-Southern School Focus group)

Parents were told about the government policy that allows girls to go back to school after giving birth to a child. They were encouraged to keep their daughters and give them a second chance to go back to school. Another female parent indicated,

We visit homes to check out young girls who do not go to school. We reason with parents who indicate that their daughters are interested in getting married

rather than going to school. Today, primary education is free. We feel pity for girls who cannot go back to school. As of now, we have 10 girls who have come back to school. (Southern School Parents' Focus Group)

Although parents admitted that girls dropped out of school because of issues that were sometimes beyond the children's control, they pointed out that girls also needed to take responsible for their learning. One parent commented,

In addition, when girls leave school, if one advises them they answer rudely.

A girl might say to her mother, "Are you educated? Did you complete school?"

With such attitude, it is not easy for girls to complete their education. Often they leave school early. (Female member of Eastern Focus group)

In addition, one male participant stated,

The advantage of educating both girls and boys is that if both are given the opportunity, they will live a good life. In addition, they will be enlightened. When development projects come to our village, they ask for the educated people. The project managers give equal employment opportunity whether one is male or female. The aim is to develop Malawi, so that the country can move ahead. (Male member-Eastern Focus Group)

Girls leave school early because they lack resources, but it would be better if they completed school so that they can have a future as teachers and District Education Managers so that they can enable fellow women and girls advance their education. Honestly, women's education is not advancing. (Female Participant Eastern School Parents Focus Group)

Another female participant added,

These days, girls' freedoms have to be respected. Girls need to be more educated just as boys. In Malawi, every organization has the same expectation of job performance regardless of gender. (Southern School Parents Focus Group)

Concerning mental capability, teachers were asked if they had noticed change in girls' participation. Teachers pointed out that they had.

Eight girls scored higher marks in my class in math and science. These are the subjects that are usually difficult for girls. (Eastern School Teacher)

Girls are now competing with the boys in mathematics and science and some girls are taking good positions in the exams. The teacher also rated the attendance of girls as good. (Southern School Teacher)

The SCI has contributed to the education of both boys and girls through the provision of comic books which is used as a supplementary reader (Southern school teacher.

To ensure effective instruction, one teacher suggested the following ways of improving instruction:

Providing adequate teaching and learning materials for both teachers and learners, presenting gifts to the pupils who performed well in class, and organizing education visits for the SCI club to places of interest in Malawi to encourage girls to enjoy schooling (Southern School Teacher).

When I asked the teacher why there were no education visits at the time, the teachers pointed out that the Ministry of Education had issued a policy banning teachers from

collecting money from students and parents for extra curricular activities because some teachers abused their positions by misusing the funds that they had collected. The teachers at the two schools lamented that the policy was a drawback for the schools.

4.6.4 Political Capability

Political capabilities relate to the ability of individuals to exercise their political freedoms (Sen, 1999). Political capabilities of individuals might be associated with gender relations experienced at the institutional level. Institutions might include the household, school, church, and other public spaces. Participants of Southern school focus group pointed out that through the many groups available in their communities they were able to voice their concerns with regards to development needs at the school, as well as within the communities at large. An observation that might relate to politics within the family was stated by one of the female participants,

In most situations parents favour sons. They do not think daughters are worth much and should not be educated. As a result some parents pressure their daughters to marry early, which is a bad practice. Parents, send your children to school because they will be your future leaders. They might help you in future compared to the sons whom you are sending to school. I plead with you parents not to discriminate sons and daughters because they both are your children. The old saying states “if you treat the child well, you might enjoy the fruits of your labour.” (Girl from Southern School)

Teachers pointed out that in order for girls to be successful in school, they needed to feel that school was important. The messages that girls heard at home should be similar to the messages that they heard at school. Teachers gave examples of girls

who started school at an older age because parents believed that it was more important to train them to do household chores. Some girls enrolled in Standard one at the age of nine or 10. By the time they reached Standard 5, they were 14 or older and not interested in school. There were more absences in school especially in Standard 5 to Standard 6. Teachers reported that by the time girls reached puberty, and went for initiation, they came back to school feeling much older because at some of the initiation ceremonies they were advised,

You can go for any man no matter what age because you are a grown up. You have been given a new name, so behave as an adult.

When some initiates went back to school, they were no longer interested in school, but made sexual advances on their teachers. Such a situation was exacerbated by the gowelo system. Teachers suggested that parents needed civic education in order to appreciate the importance of school. The messages the pupils got at home should be the same messages they got at school.

4.6.5 Care Capability

Care refers to the taking care of children and other dependants, especially the elderly (Robeyns, 2003). As well the term might refer to the people who need care. The question for this section focused on how the community had contributed towards girls' access, retention, and achievement in school. The tenacity of the girls and boys to continue school was also expressed in the following words,

I am very happy because the SCI club came to our school and this club has taught us that we should not leave school until completion so that we can stand on our two feet and be able to provide for our needs. In addition, gender

discrimination is not good because if the teachers favour boys, girls become despondent. It is better for teachers to love both boys and girls. When teachers distribute books to the class they should provide for each gender equally so that no one is unhappy so that we can work hard in school. (Girl from Southern School).

Parents also pointed out that they were contributing in ensuring that boys and girls enrolled and stayed in school. One parent reiterated,

Girls have other problems at school because as they reach puberty/ teenage stage, boys pressure them into relationships that result in early pregnancies. Every Wednesday, the women's group is available to advise girls who might have needs, such as lack of financial, material, and social support from home, being forced to marry, and sexual harassment whether at school or in the community. As members of the women's group, we are also responsible for assisting to identify school girls who are pregnant and seek solutions, such as encouraging the girls to report the man or boy who is responsible so that he can be accountable. We also discuss the issues with the parents. (Southern School Parents' Focus Group)

Parents were asked to further explain why they believed school provided girls a future and they explained,

A girl who goes to school has a chance to acquire skills, such as reading and writing, which might enable her to get employed or operate a business in order to be economically independent. In a country where everyone depends on the

assistance of their children in their old age, we believe girls are capable of extending a hand to their aging parents.

The moderator further asked parents why they believed their daughters would help them when men are the ones who sometimes controlled women's income, for instance, in a marriage. How would they be sure a married daughter would be able to help? One female parent indicated,

Even if a married daughter has a husband who controls the family's income, an employed daughter still has more opportunity to secure some financial assistance than a non- employed woman. As well, if a husband proved to be abusive, an employed woman has more choices in terms of deciding to leave the marriage in order to manage her own affairs.

Although it seemed that teachers were mostly responsible for ensuring girls completed school, on the aspect of care, one of the teachers stated,

Girls need encouragement from both teachers and parents. They need to know that they are important in the community. Sometimes girls are lazy because they believe that no one cares about their performance.

In order to motivate girls at school, some teachers encouraged girls in the following ways:

- *Assigning leadership roles such as being group leaders,*
- *Assigning girls challenging tasks in class just as the boys,*
- *Encouraging girls about the benefits of school, and*
- *Advising girls to work together with the boys.*

Boys were also advised to create a friendly environment in class, so that, girls too, could succeed in class. Teachers generally believed that the SCI had contributed considerably to the sensitization of the community on the importance of girls education, but that parents needed to do more to contribute towards the care of their children by ensuring that they start school at an early age, attend classes daily, provide them decent clothes, explain to their children the importance of school, check children's attendance and class work.

4.6.6 Social Capability

Social capability refers to the freedom for an individual to engage in different forms of social interactions and associations without harassment (Nussbaum, 2001). In the case of this study, the focus was on the networks that were available for pupils in their immediate environments such as the home and school, as well as what was available within the wider community through their parents. Social capability in this case will be presented using the tenets of social capital as presented by Putnam (2000) and Coleman (1999).

4.7 Perspectives of Students and Parents on Social Capital

The purpose of this section was to find out if students had social connections at home and at school. It was assumed that the social connections in the form of networks, friendships, family ties, trust, shared values, and sustainable communities would enable students to survive the school experience. Students' questionnaire responses, focus group discussions, and classroom observations provided the data for this section.

Students referred to gender discrimination as a concern by participants both at home and school. When requested to specify how they dealt with gender discrimination at home and at school, of 32 responses, 59% (19) indicated that at home, they discussed

their problems with their mothers. About one fifth, 22% (7) of the respondents indicated they discussed their concerns with their fathers. The rest suggested they discussed their concerns with relatives or friends. It was encouraging to note that a higher percentage of children indicated they communicated their concerns to parents. Parents were not always open to their children's concerns. Historically, there was a time when it was not easy to relate to parents directly because they distanced themselves from their children. Most children used to go to relatives such as aunts and uncles to discuss their problems.

At school, students indicated they discussed their concerns with teachers 35% (11), reported to parents 29% (9), reported to SCI club members 19% (6) and 16% (5) indicated that they reported their concerns to the school committee. In addition to reporting their concerns to parents, both Eastern and Southern schools have UNICEF women's groups that were established to look into the concerns of girls. The day I visited Southern School, I witnessed a case where a girl came to report her concerns to a member of the mothers' group. The availability of the different community groups at the school seemed to indicate a healthy and caring environment for the students.

This section further examines social capital as a follow up to the responses that participants gave on the students' questionnaires. Questionnaire data indicated that when students had concerns they told parents, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts, and teachers. When asked why they told these people, the participants indicated that they helped them to make the right decisions, assisted them with personal needs, such as shoes, school uniform, exercise books, and food. Since personal issues like sex are sensitive ones, I checked with one of the parents how they assisted adolescent boys and girls after the children reached puberty. I was told that when participants had personal concerns that were sexual, relating to sickness, and relationships, specific individuals handled them.

At the adolescent stage, parents in the district did not organize formal initiations, but appointed a trusted adult who could guide the growing boy or girl on sexual matters and other matters of adulthood. For most Malawian parents, it is taboo to discuss sexual issues with their children. Immediate family members can handle issues of sickness and relationships, while sexual matters are assigned to extended family members or acquaintances.

One aspect that ensures healthy social development of adolescents is friendship. In her research on social capital, Morrow (2003) found that according to children, friendship meant “emotional support, providing a sympathetic ear, respect, being there, providing advice, help, caring, sharing, reciprocity, someone to share secrets with, to have fun with” (pp. 9-10). The first question that I asked the focus group participants was whether they had someone whom they could visit with at school, play at home, and do assignments with. All focus group participants pointed out that they had someone they could relate to.

The second aspect on social capital referred to connections beyond the family. Students were asked if they would feel free to ask for help from the family’s neighbour in the absence of their parents. All participants suggested that they could. They also believed that the neighbours would help them. It was not surprising that children would believe in their neighbours because that is the way of life in most rural communities of Malawi. This way of life echoed the wise saying that it takes a whole village to raise a child. Imagining a negative scenario, the students were asked what they would do if someone influenced them to leave school like Sara’s uncle did. The students spoke in a chorus, “We would not leave school.” Finally, I asked the children to tell me if they felt

safe in their community. Participants of Eastern school indicated that they were safe in their community.

When asked whether they liked living in the rural community, the students from Eastern school (farther from the rural town) indicated they did, because there were many gardens. On the other hand, students from Southern school indicated that they did not feel safe in their community. They suggested living in the city. As the head teacher of Southern school pointed out, the social environment of the school was complex because of the different people who came to work at the estate.

Perceptions of parents were examined based on social capital elements of shared values, social interaction, trust, and sustainable communities. Data were collected through parents' focus group discussions at both research sites.

4.7.1 Shared Values

Shared values fall within the category of cognitive forms of social capital and are facilitated by structural social capital through established roles, networks. (Krishna & Uphoff, 2002, p.88). Structural capital is objective, external, observable, and more easily modified, for example roles, social networks, rules, procedures and precedence. Cognitive capital is subjective, internal, dealing with how people think and feel, hence difficult to change. Cognitive capital includes norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs. According to the parents' focus groups of both Eastern and Southern schools, most parents in both communities shared values based on the different formal and informal social networks. Parents' networking as a community was based on their belief in the importance of education for their children and overall, for their communities. Networking came through when parents were asked what they would do if their school went without a teacher for a long time. The parents responded,

We would work through our school committees, PTA, and Women's groups to ensure new teachers were posted to each of the two schools. If there was need for a teacher's house, the community would be mobilized to build one, provided we received funding for roofing from government, through the development agencies. (School Chairman-Southern School Focus Group)

To emphasize the cooperative nature of their community, one female participant stated,

We are a cooperating community. When there is need to carry out development projects, we all take part (Eastern School Parents' Focus Group).

On the same issue of shared values, a male participant at Eastern School stated,

This community consists of five villages. If all are informed of projects that need to be undertaken, we meet here at the school. We work together like ants
(Eastern School Parents Focus Group).

Another female participant commented,

We cooperate among the five villages. Two parents from each village make this committee, which assists this school (Eastern School Focus Group).

Evidence of the parents' value of girls' education was demonstrated through their labour, leadership, and time contributions to school projects as stated by a female focus group member of Southern school.

The five villages that surround this school have worked together to improve accommodation in the school. Parents cooperated to mould bricks, bake bricks, and build some classrooms. This is our contribution towards the development of the school (Southern School Parents Focus Group)

Another focus group participant added:

Both men and women from the surrounding villages have assisted in the building project by drawing water and carrying bricks to the building site (Southern School Parents Focus Group).

Although most parents were committed to their children's education in these school communities, they did not take part in academic tasks. They were mostly engaged in development projects and provided other supports through the different groups to ensure girls and boys stayed in school. Most parents consider teachers as specialists and might be intimidated because of their lower level of education. It seemed that one of the reasons for such a situation was that the curriculum was fixed and based on examinations.

4.7.2 Social Interaction

Within the two school communities, social interaction was evidenced at several levels such as between parents and children, teachers and pupils, pupils and members of the UNICEF women's group, teachers and parents, parents and leaders of different committees, women's groups and national, international groups such as UNICEF Malawi, World Food Programme (WFP), chief's and village members. Social interaction went beyond a kinship structure of relations, where social capital is limited to intra-community ties, cultural practices, and political context (Ortix, 2001). Outside the two school communities, participants indicated that they were members of groups such as the traders association, credit finance group, political groups, religious groups, cultural association, health committee, water, sports group, and food for work. When asked to

indicate their contributions to these groups, parents explained that they worked hand-in-hand to ensure healthy lives for the community members.

While a good number of organized groups have been established within and outside the school, parents pointed out that at the informal level, individuals sometimes experienced alienation because of individual differences. When asked what differences could cause divisions among people, one female participant pointed out,

Sometimes sickness can alienate people. Depending on the nature of the illness such as the one we are experiencing these days. (Southern School Focus Group)

The moderator probed further and the participant indicated that she was talking about HIV/ AIDS. Because of the stigma, alienation, and fear that HIV/ AIDS patients experience, it was taboo to say an individual was suffering from HIV/ AIDS, even when people were aware of the situation. Most individuals referred to the related illnesses, which result from low immunity as tuberculosis, malaria, anaemia, diarrhoea, and meningitis.

When parents were asked to indicate other causes of alienation among community members, participants pointed out problems such as poverty, which was characterized by lack of capital to start businesses, lack of ownership of animals such as cattle, goats, or chickens, and sickness in general. Participants added that behaviours such as gossip, theft, smoking, over drinking, and offensive speech might cause members to dissociate from groups. In the conclusion to the discussion, focus group participants were asked ways by which the lack of cooperation could be addressed in their communities. Responses included the need to love everyone despite their

weaknesses. Participants pointed out that there was need to be respectful and inclusive of community members who were less fortunate, and loving them as brothers and sisters.

Another problem that women reported was their struggle to speak on behalf of girls at the organizations outside their immediate communities. One mother reported,

We have been struggling to process a bursary for one of the girls who passed her standard eight examinations with flying colours, but the parents could not afford to pay for her school fees. We were processing the bursary through a male-dominated office and we believe that if there were more female officers at the office, they might have helped us more. (Southern School Parents Focus Group)

I pursued the issue with one of my former colleagues, a female university graduate and head teacher of one of the district's secondary schools to find out how the system worked. She told me that she had on several occasions secured grants for her own female students, but that it mattered who one knew and networked with. Unfortunately when I told her the issue, she could not assist because she was transferring from the district in a couple of weeks.

Finally, participants were asked to indicate if women and girls' lives had changed through the SCI and the social interaction that was available between the school and community groups.

Yes, the lives of girls have changed because children who were not going to school have enrolled and are proceeding to secondary school. If the trend continues, the communities will have more educated girls through the SCI (Southern School Focus Group women clapped and ululated to show their support).

4.7.3 Trust

At the micro level, people were generally trusting of their family members as was depicted by the pupils. Youth participants indicated that they told their needs and problems to immediate members of their families, extended families, and friends. In addition, pupils indicated that in the absence of parents, they would ask for help from their neighbours. Within the wider community, there was evidence of trust as demonstrated through the community members' responsibilities entrusted them as canteen leaders, keeping food rations for their school communities and food providers, who offered to cook for the children at school. In an area hard hit by famine, it would not have been easy to trust individuals with food rations.

On the other hand, parents did not seem comfortable leaving their adolescent daughters with only male teachers at school, hence the establishment of the UNICEF mothers' group to help monitor and be available for the girls. This reminds me of one school that I visited by accident because I had the wrong name. At this school, parents expressed much grief because the only female teacher had died a couple of days before. The spokeswoman reiterated,

When she was alive we did not worry about coming to the school to monitor the girls too often because we knew the female teacher represented our interests with regards to our daughters. We have lost an important member of staff and now we will have to leave our chores every other day to go to school to monitor and assist the girls. Having one female teacher on staff makes all the difference.

As explained earlier, the lack of female teachers was an issue for Eastern and Southern schools. Although Southern school had one female untrained teacher, parents

still felt she would not be able to meet the needs of all the girls in the school. In both situations, parents did not seem to trust male teachers with their adolescent daughters. The issue of teachers impregnating girls is very real in some Malawian school communities as reported by Chapalapata in Malawi News (1999).

One of the major problems Social Mobilization Campaign (SMC-EQ) found in its research was that of the teacher-girl relationships which, according to Kaunda, resulted in almost five girls getting married to teachers at one particular school. A daughter of a village headman was among those who got married to a teacher at the school, so we can tell what kind of education our children get in schools. (p. 8)

It seemed that parents cannot entrust their adolescent daughters to male teachers because culturally males are powerful in most Malawian communities. Mothers and fathers realized the vulnerability of their daughters. Although regulations exist about teachers molesting students when sexual abuse/ harassment, rapes, unplanned pregnancies take place, it is devastating to the families and most rural families opt for marrying their daughters off. Although parents or teachers did not recall recent situations of teachers impregnating girls in the two school communities, other similar schools had. According to the Primary Education Advisor (PEA) in the area, sensitization through programmes like SCI and tougher measures followed by the communities against any child abuse has made these communities generally safer.

4.7.4 Sustainable Communities

For any community to be sustainable, stakeholders should be able to improve their social, economic, and environmental attributes so that members can continue to lead healthy, productive and enjoyable lives (Flora, 1994, p. 29). Sustainable communities have diverse resources, such as people, organizations, and relationships. With reference to the two school communities that I studied, there was evidence of

availability of resources, such as organized groups, labour, creativity, commitment, vision, and relationships.

4.7.3.1 Resources

To ensure successful completion of school, parents within Eastern and Southern school communities had and continue to contribute towards the education of their children, their time, labour, leadership, and some basic needs at the community level. As mentioned in some of the previous sections, parents have assisted in the building of classroom blocks by moulding bricks. In some cases, men have been involved in the actual building. As well, parents have been engaged in growing the vegetable gardens and the orchards, providing meals for their children, managing the canteen which contained monthly food rations for girls, going into homes to encourage children, especially girls, to attend school. At the family level, parents were also committed to providing the best for their children. One woman who had been recently separated from her husband commented,

I need to find my husband so that we work out how we will provide for the school fees of our children. I cannot manage on my own.

4.7.3.2 Labour

Because of the economic struggles the two rural communities experienced, most parents could only commit their time and labour, to the development projects at their schools. Instead of hiring individuals to do development work, community members carried out the tasks. In most cases funding agencies such as the government and non-governmental organizations have been responsible for the cost of the most expensive

items like iron sheets for roofing, cement, and desks. One woman from Southern school stated,

I am in the women's group at this school. I see many problems here. We need another school block. We have already assembled sand and we have bricks. We want to build an additional school block. We want to ask the government agents to assist us quickly in this job. Any time they come, they will find us ready.

In the case where there were no materials for building permanent structures, communities mobilized and used local materials such as wooden poles and grass to build temporary structures that could be used as classrooms for the children (Figure 3.5, p. 174). Although parents were willing to volunteer in the school development activities, sometimes the work was too much considering that they needed to look after their own family needs as well. Another woman of the UNICEF women's group at Southern School pointed out,

We need bicycles because we feel tired walking to different homes to encourage and advise parents concerning their children's education.

47.3.3 Relationships

Relationships also play a critical role in developing a sustainable community. In regards to the two school communities, both had familial and gendered relationships. Although women were responsible for their daughters, the UNICEF women's groups have, to a certain extent enhanced the voices of the mothers concerning the education of their daughters. While most mothers would not have a say if the father decided that the daughter should leave school, the voices of the mothers group have played a mediating

role, encouraging some fathers to change their minds or even to provide for the needs of their daughters. Other relationships among community members were demonstrated through the basic services that individuals or groups provided. At school, students related to their teachers formally and informally. For instance, students who learned under trees cooperated with their teachers by arranging the desks under the trees everyday, and storing them after classes. As well, parents who took turns to cook meals for the pupils cooperated with the head teacher in the use of the storage rooms and premises in general. The volunteers were assured that there would be no intimidation from staff and students. In addition, students were free to report issues to the members of the mother's group or the head teacher when need arose.

Flora (1994) suggested that one of the characteristics of sustainable communities is to “look for appropriate external resources to achieve their goals, while taking steps to reduce their dependency on external factors. Such communities spend their money with a vision towards the future of the community” (p. 29). An examination of the way the two school communities operated revealed that their schools could not survive without the assistance from outside. As explained in the first chapter, there were several programmes that had been introduced at the school to ensure sustainable education. Permanent school buildings, solid desks, food rations for girls, and a feeding program for the whole school, orchard, vegetable garden, and the mothers group all contributed to the sustainability of the school communities.

4.8 Classroom Observations

The purpose of the classroom observations was to record class interactions according to gender. Classroom instructional observations were conducted at both Eastern and Southern schools. My first teaching observations took place at Southern

school. The classes that were observed at Southern school were standards Four, Six and Eight. Standards Four and Six learned outside under the trees. Standard Eight students were in a classroom and everyone sat at a desk. Male teachers taught all three classes. In order to collect data for this exercise, I used a Class Observation Form (Appendix S) that recorded class interactions by gender. Data were collected following guided questions, which were on the Observation Form. The following questions guided the observations:

- Who asks questions in class?
- How do students ask questions?
- What is the sitting arrangement within the class?
- How do students select seats?
- Are there dead zones?
- If the class is grouped for discussions, are the groups divided by gender?
- Does the level of difficulty of the question make a difference when calling on students?
- To whom does the teacher call for responses?
- With whom does the teacher make eye contact?
- How does the instructor respond to answers/ questions?

4.8.1 Southern School

Southern school was the first to be visited for class observations. The school was more easily accessible because it was close to a main road.

4.8.1.1 Standard Four: English lesson

The class was conducted under a tree (Figure 4.5) and all the pupils were sitting on the ground. The teacher was prepared for the class as he had a lesson plan. It was a reading lesson and the teacher guided the pupils as they read from the portable chalkboard. Students read the passages as a whole class, in rows, and individually. In the

process of the lesson both boys and girls responded to the teachers' oral questions by putting up their hands. Pupils had no opportunity to ask questions. It was a teacher centred lesson. Students were not seated according to gender, but were mixed in the rows. During the lesson, the side sections became dead zones. When the teacher asked students to read or answer a question, he called on girls more than boys. The level of difficulty of the reading passages were the same for both boys and girls. The nature of the reading assignment did not vary since it was the same passage that was on the chalkboard. The teacher made eye contact with both boys and girls. During instruction, mostly girls were asked to answer questions. Sometimes they were praised and at other times they were acknowledged politely.

4.81.2 Standard Six: mathematics lesson

Standard Six pupils at Southern school were also sitting under a tree. Some had desks and others were sitting on the ground. I observed a mathematics lesson and as with



most classes, the lesson was teacher centred. The teacher asked questions and both boys and girls raised their hands to respond. There was no blurting out of answers. Students in this class were arranged according to gender. Girls were seated in front on the ground while boys were seated at the back, mostly on desks. When I asked about the seating arrangement, I was told that it was easier for the girls because they were wearing dresses. If they wanted to stand, they would not have to worry about who was looking. In this class, the right side was a dead zone. The teacher made his eye contact mostly to the left side of the class. The teacher did not praise but acknowledged girls who gave right answers, but also called on both boys and girls. The lesson I observed was on introducing new work, *multiplication of fractions*.

4.8.1.3 Standard Eight: mathematics lesson

Standard Eight Class was housed inside the school building and had adequate desks (Figure 4.6). As in most classes, the teacher was in charge of asking questions.

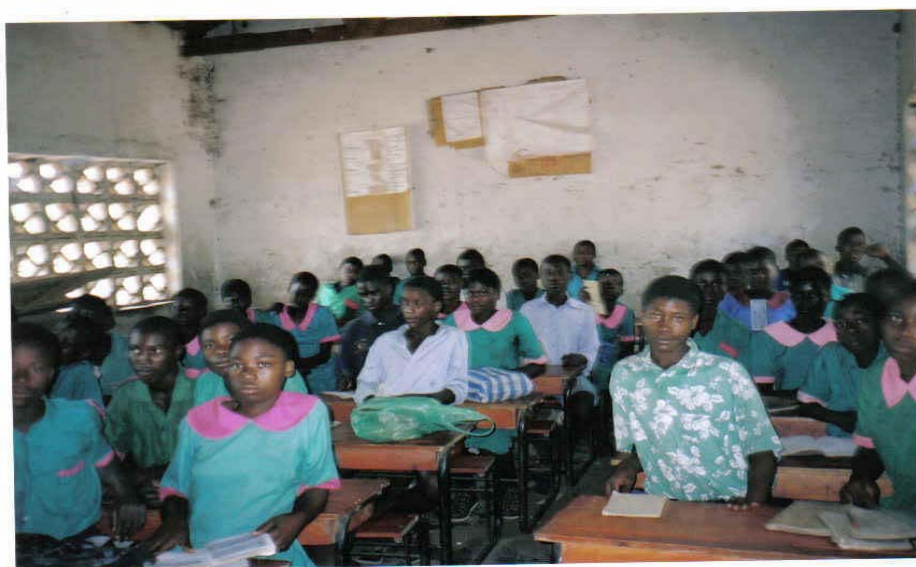


Figure 4.6 Standard Eight Pupils of Southern School in a Classroom

4.8.2 Eastern School

Eastern School was the second school to be visited. The school was not easily accessed because it was located farther from the main road.

4.8.2.1 Standard Three: Chichewa lesson

Standard Three was housed in a rub-hall (Figure 4.7). A portable chalkboard was placed in front and a reading passage was written on it. Students sat at desks and rows were mixed by gender. The teacher stood in front of the class.



Figure 4.7 Pupils at Eastern School Learning in a Rub-Hall

Like most classes that I observed, the lessons were teacher centred. The teacher asked questions and students responded. Standard Three class had no dead zones during

the instructional time. The teacher praised the boys more by asking the class to clap for each boy's correct response, while the class clapped once or not at all for a girl's correct answer. In order to be called upon, pupils were required to raise their hand and not blurt out the answer. Both girls and boys were called upon to respond to questions or read a passage from the chalkboard. The level of difficulty of the questions or reading passage was the same for both girls and boys. The teacher made eye contact with the whole class.

4.8.2.2 Standard Six: Social Studies lesson

This class was housed in a formal classroom, which had desks for everyone. Like the rest of the classes that I visited, the setting was traditional, with the teacher standing in front of the class. There was a chalkboard built into the front wall of the classroom. The teacher planned the seating arrangement and pupils were mixed by gender at their desks. There were no dead zones in this class because the teacher maintained eye contact with everyone.

During the lesson, the teacher mostly used the questioning technique. Students did not ask questions, but waited for the teacher to ask questions. They were responsive when the teacher asked or challenged them on the subject content. Most students felt uncomfortable questioning their teachers because culturally it might be construed as being disrespectful. As in other classes, the teacher explained, asked questions and summarized points on the chalkboard. Both boys and girls were called upon to answer questions. Male students were praised more than female students. Chorus answers were heard occasionally, but did not disturb the flow of the lesson. The teacher reminded the class to raise their hands in order to answer questions.

Although almost all classes I visited at Eastern and Southern schools had mixed seating arrangement according to gender, the methods of teaching were not challenging to students. There was no teacher who utilized group or paired work. The teacher was the authority. Considering the needy circumstances, such as too many pupils per class, lack of adequate textbooks, and other teaching and learning aids, it might not be easy for teachers to use alternative methods of teaching. One teacher from Southern school stated,

We have problems at this school, such as, inadequate classrooms, inadequate teaching and learning materials, and inadequate toilets.

The lack of teaching materials is an on going problem in most educational programs in Malawi. The national coordinator of FAWEMA- caretaker of the SCI stated,

The weaknesses of FAWEMA in the dissemination of the SCI are the lack of consolidation and follow-up visits to supervise and encourage the activities of the clubs. In addition, we do not monitor due to lack of funds. Although we have these problems, the SCI was an effective way of information dissemination and also to equip girls with life skills. As well, FAWEMA has the capacity to disseminate SCI effectively, the ability to translate Sara comics into Chichewa, and the experience helped FAWEMA to build the capacity of the beneficiaries of the SCI

Lack of adequate toilets has implications for adolescent girls who have started menses because they lack privacy when they are at school. In talking about gender issues, the SCI coordinating teacher from Eastern school stated,

I always encourage girls by assigning them responsibilities as group leaders. I also give girls more practical work in class. In my class, eight girls scored higher marks than boys in mathematics and science.

The SCI coordinating teacher from Southern school echoed similar sentiments

Girls are now competing with boys in mathematics and science. Some girls are taking good positions in class.

The issue of performance in mathematics and science is often referred to as an issue for girls' education because research has found that these subjects intimidate most girls. The result is girls fail examinations because these subjects are considered part of the core curriculum at primary and secondary school levels.

4.9 Chapter Summary

The three major categories of findings that were addressed in this chapter were firstly, the description of the SCI clubs, followed by a presentation of the demographic data of the participants. Secondly, the nature of the SCI was presented, which was followed by an outline of girls' problems within the research sites. Thirdly, the perceptions of parents and pupils about social capital and capabilities were presented. Finally, the researcher presented findings from classroom observations. The SCI clubs were described in terms of the mandate of the SCI, which was to disseminate the experiences of the model girl Sara and later relate the issues to the experiences of girls in the selected communities. The issues are presented based on the problems that girls experience due to their gender.

The perceptions of pupils and parents on the capabilities and social capital were critical in determining if girls really experienced similar problems in their communities. Major challenges for girls included work overload and discrimination by some parents

when allocating resources, At school, it was perceived girls were assigned more chores compared to boys. In the area of social capital, participants observed that there were some supportive networks available for girls at both school communities, for example, UNICEF mothers' group.

Finally, the observation of class interactions revealed that more learning could take place if pupils were provided conducive learning environment in terms of pupil-centered methods of teaching, adequate learning facilities and materials such as, desks, reading texts and notebooks.

CHAPTER 5

Summary of the Study, Discussion, and Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, I present a summary of the findings, discussions, and the conclusions of the study. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the implications of the study for theory, research, and practice.

5.2 Summary of the Study

This section recounts the design of the study, which includes the purpose, the conceptual framework, as well as the research methodology.

5.2.1 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research was to determine stakeholder perceptions of the extent to which the social capital of girls has been enhanced through the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) in two selected rural school communities of Chikwawa district. As well, the study ascertained if the SCI was a vehicle that enabled girls to develop the necessary capabilities that would help them to contribute to Chikwawa's social capital. More specifically, the inquiry addressed the following questions:

1. What was the nature of the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) and how was it implemented?
2. What were the perceptions of students, parents, and teachers about this programme?
3. To what extent did stakeholders perceive the social capital and capabilities of girls had been enhanced through the SCI?

5.2.2 The Research Design

Because of the nature of the study, it was imperative that I approach it from the mixed methods design. This approach combined quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. I engaged case study tenets because they complemented the multi-method inquiry (Knight, 2002, pp. 41-42) and the separate locations of my study. As well, the diverse methods of data collection assisted me to capture the uniqueness of the school communities, although they were both in rural areas. The methods of data collection used were individual questionnaires, focus group discussions, class observations participant observation, photographs, documents, and structured interviews. The study engaged a total of 59 students from Eastern and Southern schools. There were 30 pupils from Eastern school and 29 students from Southern school, who responded to questionnaires. Parents' focus groups were attended by a total of 41 parents, 21 at Eastern school and 20 at Southern school. The researcher interviewed four teachers, two from each school, as well as the National Coordinator for FAWEMA, who are the custodians of the SCI.

Data analysis was carried out in a way that enabled the voices of the participants to be heard. The researcher tried to be more of a conduit, receiving and trying to make sense of the data. I tried to be fair and just, creating a climate that would expose and validate women's and girls' everyday experiences of subordination and survival (Madriz, 2000, p. 836). Data analysis for the questionnaires was carried out using descriptive analysis on the SPSS computer data analysis package. Data from the focus group discussions were taped, transcribed, and analyzed manually, using the themes that were developed through the research questions and the conceptual framework.

5.3 Conceptual Frameworks

The study adopted Sen's (1999) and Nussbaum's (2001) capabilities model, as well as Putnam's (2000) and Coleman's (1988) social capital theory.

5.3.1 The capabilities framework

While there are many groups who might be deprived from enjoying economic benefits within societies, women have often been unable to enjoy the fruits of a nation's general prosperity (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 1). Sen (1999) observed that people can be deprived of basic abilities which enable them to perform in personal and national development (p. 20). The assessment of the capabilities was carried out through the lenses of Harcourt's (2001) categories of capabilities, namely the basic (physical and care capabilities), individual (mental and social), and external conditions (economic and political capabilities).

5.3.2 Social capital model

Putnam (2000) observed that social capital addressed the connections among individuals (p. 19). Coleman (1988) connected social capital to the social structures and their functions (p. 110). In assessing the social environment of the students at home, school, and community at large, some characteristics of social capital, for instance shared values, social interaction, trust, and sustainable communities, as defined by Putnam and Coleman, were used. The model, which resulted from the combination of the two perspectives, enabled me to portray the interaction of the capability framework within social capital.

5.4 Summary of the Findings

The summary of the findings are based on the data from the student questionnaires, parent focus groups, structured interviews for SCI coordinators,

documents, classroom observations, the structured interview of the national coordinator of the SCI, participant observation, and photographs.

5.4.1 Demography

Class level, age, gender, mother's occupation, father's occupation, and students' career aspirations described the respondents. I noted that at Eastern school, 14 boys and 15 girls were members of the SCI and participated in the study. At Southern school there were 27 girls and 2 boys who participated (Figure 1, p. 7). There were very few boys compared to girls at Southern school SCI club, because most boys believed that the club was a girls' activity. As well, club membership is not mandatory and although the comic books demonstrate interactions between girls and boys, Sara a girl, is the main character. One might also assume that being in a remote area away from the main road might not provide individuals with alternative activities outside school time so the SCI might be an attractive engagement. On the other hand, the pupils who live in the rural, but close to the rural town might have other activities to engage in. The gender representation was different for parents' focus groups. There was an almost equal number of female and male participants at Eastern school, 10 men and 11 women and 10 men and 10 women at Southern school.

Another observation was that girls' enrolment was usually high at the beginning of standard one, but began to drop off sharply between standard one and three and gradually between standard three and eight (Figure 4.1 & 4. 2). The high enrolment of girls in 2004/2005 was attributed to the school-feeding programme, which was sponsored by the World Food Programme (WFP) that provided one meal at the school for both boys and girls and monthly food rations for girls from standard one to eight. The sharp drop off in enrolment between Standard One and Three was due to the change

in WFP feeding policy. That year, it was decided that only the girls who were in standard three to eight would receive food rations every month. In the following section I present the summary of the findings based on the three questions that guided the inquiry.

5.4.2 The Nature of the SCI

The overall goal of the SCI was to promote the Rights of the Child and support the implementation and realization of the rights with special focus on adolescent female children in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESAR)” (UNICEF, 2001, p.3). The SCI was a regional project developed to “support and reinforce on-going and future programmes supported by UNICEF, its partners and any organizations with similar goal. . . . The focus of the Sara remains the survival, protection, development and participation rights of the child” (UNICEF, 2001, pp. 2-3).

The SCI is organized around themes, which are found in the six series of comic books titled: *The Special Gift*, *Sara Saves Her Friend*, *The Lioness’s Daughter*, *The Trap*, *Choices*, and *The Empty Compound*. The main character in the comic books is an adolescent girl called Sara, who represents a role model and a symbol of girls’ empowerment in Africa (UNICEF-ESARO, 1996, Into-page).

5.4.3 Implementation of the SCI

It was found that comic books were an integral part of the SCI meetings. T-shirts were also powerful in conveying SCI messages (See Chapter 4), apart from providing decent clothing for needy students. For both schools, the number of years of participation in the SCI averaged 2.5. There were more girls than boys participating in the SCI clubs at both schools. The number of pupils who participated in the study of the SCI was 16 girls and 14 boys from Eastern School, and 27 girls and 2 boys from

Southern School. Of the six Sara episodes, three comic books, namely, *Sara Saves Her Friend*, *The Special Gift*, and *The Trap* were widely read by students from both schools. SCI meetings were scheduled four times per term or approximately once per month. The co-ordinating teachers who had been appointed by the head teachers chaired the meetings and each meeting lasted about two hours. At the two schools that I visited, the co-ordinating teachers were both males. Discussions centred on themes such as push out from school, unwanted pregnancy, HIV/ AIDS, early marriage, sexual abuse and exploitation, and child labour. In addition to discussions, members engaged in singing and drama. Drama was organized by the club members based on the different comic episodes with the guidance of the co-ordinating teachers. SCI members presented the drama to the school and wider community in order to sensitize parents and other community leaders about gender issues. SCI clubs used comic books for discussions. Although the SCI organizers have produced videotapes, they cannot be utilized in rural schools because of the lack of electricity and technology.

Their co-ordinating teachers introduced pupils to the SCI. Others indicated that friends and parents introduced them to the SCI. Some participants pointed out that they had shared the story of Sara with their families, while others had not. The comic books highlighted some major challenges that girls generally experienced, such as push-out from school due to the lack of money, lack of decent clothes, early pregnancies, forced marriages, work overload, and HIV/ AIDS.

5.4.4 Perceptions of Students and Parents about the SCI Programme

The purpose of this section is to summarize the responses that were given by students and parents concerning the SCI programme. The data came from students' questionnaires and focus group interviews, as well as parent focus group interviews.

The perspective of the participants concerning the SCI was that the programme enabled the concerned communities to spell out the problems that girls were experiencing in the communities.

Over half of the student respondents had heard about gender discrimination. Less than half of the student participants had not heard about gender discrimination. When asked to list the problems that girls experienced at school, the general observations were that teachers impregnated girls; teachers and boys discriminated against girls by bullying them; girls were exploited by teachers, who asked them to do chores in their homes; and girls were sometimes not given equal opportunity to participate in class.

Concerning gender discrimination at home, over half of the respondents indicated that gender discrimination was a problem at home. Girls experienced work overload, were verbally abused, sexually abused, forced to marry early, and forced to drop out of school.

5.4.5 Stakeholder Perceptions of Social Capital and Capabilities

A summary of pupils', parents', and teachers' perceptions about the capabilities and social capital of the SCI is presented through Harcourt's (2001) and Nussbaum's (2001) three categories of capabilities. The first category comprise the basic (physical and care capabilities), followed by the internal (mental and social capabilities), and finally, the external (economic and political capabilities). In the capability framework, social capability was presented at mostly the individual level. In this section, the social capability will be discussed within the larger framework of social capital.

5.4.6 Basic Capabilities (Physical and Care Capabilities)

The *basic capabilities*, relate to physical health, love, and care (Nussbaum, 2001; Sen, 1999). Data related to the basic capabilities, indicated girls being impregnated by

teachers leading to HIV/ AIDS; being bullied by teachers and boys; being overworked compared to boys; being allocated fewer resources compared to boys at home; being verbally abused; exploited by having to do chores at teachers' homes; not given equal chance to participate in class; and being forced to marry early. The discrimination against girls mostly related to the physical needs, care and love that girls require in order for them to develop into healthy citizens. From the basic capabilities, there were issues that were directly destructive to the physical development of girls such as early pregnancies, HIV/AIDS, *kusansa fumbi*, overworking, and inadequate resource allocation at home. The behaviours listed above seemed to have been established by cultural traditions.

Other discriminatory behaviours against girls related more to being denied love and care, verbal abuse, providing more materials to boys than girls in class, allowing girls to sit on the ground while boys sat on desks, and being denied equal chance to participate in class. Girls also reported being overworked by parents and in the process parents suggesting that the girls leave school so that they could contribute better in the home. The head teachers indicated that parents would like to train their daughters at an early age so that they could assist at home, but also are ready for marriage.

5.4.7 Internal Capabilities (Mental and Social Capabilities)

Internal capabilities include a sense of being capable, confident, and knowledgeable (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 55). The impact of the denied basic capabilities might lead to the lack or destruction of the *internal capabilities*. When girls are abused physically, they begin to feel rejected and unloved. Such a condition, if unchecked or not corrected, might lead to the loss of internal capabilities or tenacity so that girls might begin to feel incapable of doing anything except serve boys and men. Girls also lose

confidence in who they are and feel they are not knowledgeable, especially if they are not given equal opportunity to participate at school.

In this study, issues relating to internal capabilities came from the parents' focus group discussions about the SCI programme. Although most parents had not acquired adequate basic education, they expressed great interest in ensuring that their children achieved a good education. Parents who knew about the SCI programme appreciated Sara's bravery and tenacity to continue schooling. While acknowledging girls' right to an education, parents were aware of the difficulties that girls encountered in access to and survival in school. Parent groups identified issues that prevented progress at the basic level and included the lack of adequate food, clothing, lack of school fees, school materials, and sometimes the lack of interest by the pupils. Although parents acknowledged that they were responsible for the education of their children, they were also aware that their children needed to take ownership of the schooling experience and commit themselves to staying and completing school.

Teachers acknowledged that the SCI was a tool for the awareness of gender issues. They reported that they had noticed change in some girls' attitudes towards learning mathematics and science because these subjects were usually difficult for girls. After sensitization, girls were competing with boys. As well, teachers suggested that if the SCI were more creative, more pupils would attend. Teachers lacked the tools to use in the dissemination of the SCI. Teachers also observed that the lack of monitoring of the SCI program by desk officers and FAWEMA headquarters was a drawback. As well, teachers observed that it was necessary to give pupils incentives for doing well in class, so that they would work harder. One of the incentives that teachers suggested was organizing education trips for pupils to visit places of educational interest in Malawi.

Such activities would enhance the social skills of pupils at home, school, and within the wider community. For girls, the opportunity to get out of their communities would enrich their social skills since they are usually confined in the home, assisting mothers with most of the housework. Girls, like the boys would in that case have the advantage of building their social capital through the organized trips. Girls would have the opportunity of networking with people outside their communities.

5.4.8 External Conditions (Economic and Political Capabilities)

External conditions comprise the material and institutional environments, which provide the resources that enable individuals to develop. External conditions emanate from individuals who have developed economic and political capabilities who are able to influence institutions in society. People who respect individual freedoms will ensure that others develop capabilities that will enable them to exercise the same. Institutions that control the ability to access material needs, social interaction, and political fulfilment such as the family, schools, hospitals, and courts determine how far capabilities can develop (Harcourt, 2001; Nussbaum, 2001). Gender relations in the family seemed to be political because while parents reiterated that they wanted girls to go to school, they sometimes delayed the age of enrolment so that girls could learn household tasks. While it was a good idea to teach girls housework, they lagged behind the boys at school. The drawback of work overload for girls is that they become confined to the home without developing any employable skills to fall back on in times of crises, such as a drought. An example of such a situation was the women at Southern and Eastern School, who were in most cases at home and tended their gardens. At school messages could also be loaded with confusion, for example, when girls are initiated at puberty they get a name change to symbolize their adulthood. Sometimes girls are told

that at puberty/adolescence they can handle any man. Although the messages are not explicit, expectations, such as asking adolescent girls to assist single male teachers with household chores can be misleading.

Parents reiterated that although they did their best to provide for the basic needs of their families, sometimes the social environment was not safe for adolescent daughters. Some girls were not allowed to go to school because their parents believed that would be an added expense on the family. Another reason for not sending girls to school was that girls would not benefit their families in the future, but would be an asset for the families they married into. Concerning girls at the adolescent stage, some parents indicated that they would rather see their daughters married to a responsible man to prevent a child out of wedlock. Other parents seemed to suggest that although early marriage became a problem for the girl-child, it was better than promiscuity. Parents also pointed out that although the social environment was sometimes not good for girls, they too needed to take ownership of their learning.

Other issues of concern to parents were the overall poor economy in the area. Parents pointed out that girls were sometimes required to leave school because the parents could not afford the direct cost of schooling. Colcough, Rose, and Tembon, (1998) found similar evidence. Even though school fees were abolished in Malawi's public primary schools, parents were sometimes unable to provide notebooks, pens, and the necessary clothing for school. One parent explained that due to a lack of opportunities for fathers to engage in paid employment, families suffered. As explained earlier, drought, which had hit the region for a number of years, contributed to the economic pressures on rural parents. As well, parents pointed out that the lack of adequate female role models at the schools and at the district education office was a

drawback for girls' achievement. One parent pointed out the difficulties of dealing with male personnel at the education offices. She believed female education officers might have been more understanding and sympathetic of girls' needs such as bursaries, which enabled girls to enroll in secondary school. Overall, the parents who were conversant with the SCI acknowledged that it was a good tool for dissemination of message of empowerment. Their concern was that there was need to invest more into it through funding so that more girls and boys would continue to benefit from the programme.

5.5 Social Capital

Social capital was examined utilizing the tenets of social capital as presented by Putnam (2000) and Coleman (1999). In this section, I will summarize shared values, social interaction, trust, sustainable communities, and classroom observations.

Most pupils indicated that they had someone to relate to. When they had problems, they shared them with parents, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts, and teachers. Connections beyond the family included neighbours.

Students from Eastern school (farther from the rural town) indicated that they also felt safe in their neighbourhood and liked living in the rural setting because there were many gardens. Students from Southern school indicated that they did not feel safe in their community. They suggested that they would prefer living in the city. Since Southern school was closer to the main road and rural town, participants might have experienced some of the vices that spilled over from the nearby sugar estate township. As the head teacher of Southern school pointed out, the social environment surrounding the school was complex because of the different people who came to work at the nearby estate. In the following sections, the elements of social capital are summarized.

5.5.1 Shared Values

Shared values fall within the category of cognitive social capital and are difficult to change, because they are personal, demonstrating people's norms, values, attitudes and beliefs (Khrishna & Uphoff, 2002). Parents demonstrated shared values through the different formal and informal social networks. Formal social networks were established through the school committees, Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), women's groups, feeding groups, and canteen groups. Informal social networks were evident through groups such as families, religious affiliations, friendships, and cultural groups. At the formal level, parents indicated that they shared values of cooperation as evidenced from the development activities they engaged in. As members of the different committees, they assisted the school in development projects such as building school blocks. Parents pointed out that they engaged in school development activities because of their belief in the importance of a good education for their children. When I probed further to find out if sometimes people differed, I was told that they did.

Participating parents explained that sometimes people differed because they espoused different personal values for example poverty, which might be worsened by illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, which left people poor because of its long duration. As well, the stigma that it brought robbed community members of the little social capital they might have acquired. Some values that might not have been shared and caused alienation were gossip, theft, smoking, overdrinking, and offensive speech. When asked what solutions they had, participants pointed out that people needed to be inclusive and respectful regardless of one's status. The participants did not elaborate how they might achieve such a goal.

While the parents in the focus group demonstrated commitment to girls' education, pupils' perceptions seem to indicate that not all parents valued the education of girls. Girls and boys reported incidences of gender discrimination that favoured boys in the allocation of home chores and other resources at home. In addition, pupils pointed out gender discrimination in some class situations. Several pupils indicated that they wanted to experience home and school life that was non-discriminatory. Since values fall within the cognitive social capital, it might be difficult to change some people's attitudes in the two communities. One drawback in the communities that I studied was that the women, who have been empowered at the school community level, did not have more resources, which can empower them to make decisions at home. An examination of the data on parents' occupations revealed that women were mostly engaged in the fragile occupation of farming. In the event that there was a drought, they would be at a loss for financial resources and end up dependent on men. In such a situation, it would be difficult to uphold the value of girls' education, if there were inadequate financial resources or if the man of the home had other interests or values. Such experiences would also curtail the social capital of girls.

5.5.2 Social Interaction

Social interaction enables individuals to meet face-to-face, so they can know each other and share common experiences which deepen their understanding of each other (NEF, 2002). Social interaction was evident at many levels. Although rural community relationships are mostly based on kinship structures, parents of the two school communities pointed out that they interacted with groups outside their immediate communities. They had networks, which assisted them in their physical, economical, spiritual, political and social interactions. Parents also indicated that they were members

of the traders association, credit finance groups, political groups, religious groups, health committees, sports, and food for work.

Since people's values are cognitive, it might be difficult to assume that social interaction would build communities. Although individuals generally interacted with each other, group members indicated that sometimes there were challenges due to differing values, which caused alienation. In the case of the SCI, it seems that despite the different personal values, members were willing to focus on the developmental tasks at hand for the sake of the community and future of their children.

5.5.3 Trust

Young people trusted immediate family members, some extended family members, neighbours, and friends. Personal issues such as illness and sexual concerns were disclosed to parents, siblings, uncles, aunts, and friends. In the case of sexual concerns, parents made arrangements for mentors to help their daughters and sons. Mentors were responsible for advising the initiates between the ages of 12 and 15 about adulthood. At the community level, there was evidence of trust in the local leaders, as was demonstrated through the different development committees that were in place.

Although there was trust within the communities in general, parents were not comfortable sending their girls to schools where there were no female teachers, hence the establishment of UNICEF mothers' groups. Because of the reality of sexual harassment of adolescent girls by male teachers and boys, UNICEF mothers' groups have volunteered to be monitors and mentors of girls in the selected school communities. Trust, which is like capital can be accumulated and diminished. In rural settings, the name "teacher" represents more social capital because of the expertise in their job, but begins to diminish when parents hear that teachers and boys sexually

harass their daughters. The community becomes distrustful, although they accept the professional status of the teachers by sending their children to school. Women's groups were making a difference in ensuring the presence of female personnel, which gave parents the confidence to send their daughters to school. The arrangement might also ensure girls' safety, which is one of the requirements for survival in school.

5.5.3 Sustainable communities

In order to ensure growth and continuity of school communities, there is need for support. An examination of Eastern and Southern school communities revealed the availability of some resources in the form of parental contributions of time, labour, and leadership. Organizations in the form of development agencies were also considered an important resource to the two communities. The nature of resources that were available included time, labour, leadership, materials, and organized groups. Parents committed their time to development activities such as building school blocks. Parents were also engaged in planning for projects, providing leadership, and providing raw materials for building both temporary and permanent structures where necessary. They could not contribute financially to development projects because of the poor economy of rural residents in general.

In-class interactions also contributed to the data on social capital. From the data analysis, several observations emerged. First, there were classes learning under trees with all pupils seated on the ground. The second pattern showed classes located outside, under trees with some pupils seated at the desks and others on the ground. Pupils who sat on the desks were positioned at the back of the class, while those who were seated on the ground occupied the space in front of the class. A third scenario showed one class learning in a temporary grass shelter. All pupils were seated on the ground. Most of

them were seated on improvised mats. The fourth scenario was a rub-hall, which housed four classes. The classes were not separated by walls, but by location. All classes in the rub- hall were furnished with desks and a chalkboard.

In several of the classes, students were mixed by gender at the desks and in the rows. Other classes sat by gender in rows and not at the desks. Classes where desks were inadequate, almost half of the class, mostly boys sat on desks, at the back of the class, while girls sat in front on the ground. In the temporary grass shelter, there were too many pupils and no formal seating arrangement.

The general trend was that teachers initiated the class interaction. In some classes teachers maintained eye contact with the whole class. In a couple of classes, there were dead zones. As well, teachers presented work that had the same level of difficulty for both genders. Teachers engaged girls and boys equally in most of the classes.

Most teachers used the question- pause- answer technique. Almost all teachers called on both girls and boys to answer questions, except in one class where teachers engaged girls more than boys. Teachers in some cases praised boys and not girls. In other situations there was little praise for girls who answered correctly, while the class clapped for all the boys who gave a correct answer.

5.6 Conclusions and Discussions

This section discusses the conclusions based on the study data.

1. An examination of the enrolment figures for both schools for the academic year 2004- 2005 revealed that early class enrolment for girls was much higher compared to boys. Surprisingly by Standard Eight, most girls had dropped out of school. Some of the issues that caused girls to drop out of school were poverty, lack of motivation, lack of

encouragement, lack of financial support, too many home chores, and also the changes in the food available through the World Food Programme.

The findings support a study by the Centre for Educational Research and Training-CERT (2000) in Malawi, which found that girls' education was influenced by poverty, tradition, habit, and systems. Parents sent their daughters to school after weighing the economic benefits. If they believed that the investment was not economically and socially worthwhile, they did not encourage their daughters to stay in school (p. 9). Since education did not play a major role in the lives of most rural residents in Malawi, it is not easy to convince parents to keep their girls in school. The lack of female role models makes the situation worse for girls to survive in schools. While there are supports to encourage girls to stay in school, the lack of female teachers whom they could associate with is a serious drawback. Some parents have indicated that even if there were one female teacher at the school their minds would be "at rest" because she would be the eyes for the parents.

2. I concluded that the children and parents in the selected rural communities did not have a wide range of career choices. Because of the lack of exposure due to the secluded nature of most rural environments, lack of mass media, and poverty, it seemed that students were limited in their perceptions of occupational choices. Most of the students aspired to be police officers because they saw police officers and security guards in uniform, going to and from work at a factory, close to their communities. Very few aspired to be teachers, although the school was the immediate employing institution in their communities. I would also assume that the lack of female teachers might have caused most of the girls not to aspire to be teachers.

Although there was little variety of career choices, it was interesting to note that girls realize the possibility of engaging in occupations other than teaching, nursing, and farming. Apart from police work, four girls wanted to be engineers. In the democratic Malawi, although such opportunities are slim, they are achievable. Ten girls wanted to be nurses/doctors. That is not surprising because other than teaching, the medical profession is among the highest hiring sectors in Malawi.

3. I concluded that coordinating teachers of the SCI clubs in both school communities lacked adequate materials for the successful sensitization of pupils, parents, and the rest of the communities on the programme. Some parents who were conversant with the SCI indicated that materials such as T-shirts were an incentive for the students because while they were used for the transmission of SCI messages poor pupils considered them as extra clothing. As well, the lack of adequate SCI comic books was unfortunate for schools, which would benefit from the supplementary readers. The two SCI coordinating teachers at both schools pointed out that the comic books provided the pupils with a variety of reading materials because, usually, they had only one main reading text per class for the entire academic year. As well, the use of comic books might enhance pupils' mental and social capabilities as they look at and discuss the pictures and stories together. While I had no opportunity to attend any SCI club meetings the findings from the study indicated that the lack of supports for teachers and pupils might be a contributing factor for the lack of enthusiasm.

When I spoke to the coordinator of the Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi (FAWEMA), the current custodians of the SCI, she reiterated that the lack of funding had a negative impact on the success of the programme. In addition, the lack of funding also meant minimal or no monitoring. The observation

resonated with suggestions by Miske and VanBelle- Prouty (1997), who advised that programmes and policies need to foster school and community partnerships that promoted girls' education. Although the two school communities were doing their best to foster partnerships within and outside, the economic vulnerability of the area seemed to make it difficult to realize their goals.

4. I concluded that given the situation that existed at the time of the study, basic and internal capabilities were limited for girls. The perceptions of parents revealed their interest in providing the physical needs of food, clothing, and shelter for their children. As well, parents were interested in the development of the mental capabilities of their children through schooling. Although parents did their best to provide for the physical needs of their children, it was not always possible to meet all the requirements because of the poor economic conditions in the area. Fortunately, UNICEF and WFP introduced feeding programmes for the pupils at the two schools as part of their fulfillment of one of the development goals, which was to ensure safe water, sanitation, health care, school meals' in order to enhance pupils' capabilities (UNICEF, 2004). The purpose of the feeding programmes was to ensure girls were engaged in school, not searching for food with their mothers, because the burden of ensuring that the family is fed lies with the women. As well, it was hoped that the parents' engagement with school programmes would increase contact and communication between parents, teachers, officials, and others. In addition, parents would be aware of what goes on in school, and in the process, parents and the whole community would value education more (Del Rosso, 2007).

5. It was found that although many girls enrolled in school at the beginning of the school year, the enrolment of girls dropped off sharply from Standard One to Three.

At the beginning of the school year there were usually many children who were interested in school, but later dropped out although there were feeding programmes in place. Considering the situation of some of the classes, it would not be surprising for pupils to drop out of school. For instance, at Southern school, the lack of adequate classrooms might not be an incentive for pupils who learn under trees or in temporary grass shelters, especially during the rainy season. Even those who had desks, but were learning under trees would not be motivated to keep moving furniture daily from place to place. Finally, it would be worse for girls who had to sit on the ground while boys sat on desks. If pupils are to stay in school, basic facilities should be made available and distributed equitably regardless of gender. In order to ensure the development of mental and social capabilities, pupils need to be provided the best learning environment possible and they also need the support of their families.

6. The study concluded that the combined capabilities (internal capabilities and external conditions) were only somewhat available. In some homes, girls were not provided the internal capability of security and self-esteem about their future schooling. While the home environment might be considered the best place to provide combined capabilities, research findings suggested that in some cases the home did not provide them, especially for girls. The issue of heavy workload at home seemed to imply that girls were mostly confined in the home doing household chores and were not able to build confidence in other spheres outside the home. Heavy workload impacts girls' performance because they have no time to study. In some cases, depending on the nature of the task, they might be too tired to engage in schoolwork.

The issue of the lack of balance in the allocation of work load in most developing countries starts at an early age for girls, who later become women. As mentioned earlier

in the chapter, sometimes girls drop out of school due to too many home chores, which rob them of the time to do studies (Chimombo, et al., 2000, p. 4). In the rural and most peri-urban areas, girls are expected to wake up early in the morning to fetch water, sweep and mop the house, heat bathing water for the members of the family, cook breakfast and later go to school. Boys, on the other hand, might help sweep the yard, but in most cases they wait for the female members of the family to provide them with bathing water and later breakfast and then they go to school. In most cases they have adequate time to play before class. When girls come from school, they continue the cycle of chores. If they are adolescents, they might take over their mother's responsibility with the idea of training them to be responsible wives or alleviating their mother's pressure of work (UNICEF-ESARO, 1996). Girls might eat lunch, wash dishes, draw more water or go to the maize mill or market, prepare supper or bath their siblings. At that time, the mothers might be at work or engaged in some business ventures to make ends meet financially. By the time a girl goes to bed she is very tired with no time or energy to read or do homework. In the morning the cycle begins again and she goes to school tired and no homework done. If teachers are insensitive, they might start calling her names, such as "dumb," "why not sell fish at the market," and "you are just day dreaming." The vicious cycle continues into adulthood, when the girl has her own family.

Because boys are allowed more free time and encouraged to be outgoing compared to girls, in the process, they engage in social networks that are more formal and extensive outside the family. In the end boys and men accumulate more social capital, which enables them to develop the language of negotiating for their needs, be it finding jobs or other needs (World Bank Group, 2006).

7. The study concluded that some girls were denied examination fees because parents were experiencing economic pressures. At other times parents seemed to suggest that girls might not benefit the family much, hence not bother spending too much on them (Heward, 1999). In yet another situation, it might be family dynamics where a girl is staying with a stepmother and she is told her father will not pay for her Standard Eight examination fees because she is rude (Chapter 4). In such situations how does a child cope if there is no one to speak for her? The implications of such experiences might be lack of exposure to positive aspects of life and finally the crashing of the girls' dreams which leads girls to fall through the cracks of the education system. In this case, the family becomes an unfriendly institution where parents might have failed to provide a valuable external condition.

On the other hand, through outside networks such as the UNICEF women's group and the WFP, parents could be exposed to alternative ways of dealing with their children's education and encouraged to make positive decisions, especially for the girl children. At the school level, there was a demonstrated effort to provide the combined capabilities through outside interventions. At both Southern and Eastern schools, there was an indication that the combined capabilities might have been achieved through school clubs, daily school feeding programme, monthly food rations for girls (WFP), the orchard project, building projects, and the UNICEF mother's group. In order to ensure that the list of activities that contribute to external conditions is effective, individuals within the school and community at large need to have their basic and internal capabilities developed through the informal cultural structures and the formal structures. Such a scenario might bring about maximum interaction with their social environment (Nussbaum, 2001, pp. 55-56). An element that relates to the combined capabilities is social capital.

8. The study concluded that parents demonstrated shared values through their commitment to providing better learning facilities for their children through different formal and informal social networks. Formal social networks were established through the school committees, Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), women's groups, feeding groups, and canteen groups. Informal social networks were evident through groups such as families, religious affiliations, friendships, and cultural groups. At the family level, pupils indicated that there were social networks in the form of relationships they had with parents, brothers, sisters, neighbours, aunts, and uncles. They indicated that in their time of need, they would not hesitate to ask for help even outside the circle of family and friends. This revelation ties in with Morrow's (2003) study in which young people indicated that they needed friends to be there for them so that they could share their concerns, play with them and just be there for each other.

At the school level, students indicated that if they had concerns, they would share with fellow pupils, friends, teachers, members of the SCI club and school committee members. While this seemed a natural way of dealing with issues at Southern and Eastern schools, girls might be disadvantaged if they had issues to tell female teachers, because there were no female teachers. While the situation might have seemed hopeless for girls, the presence of UNICEF mothers' group assisted the girls in both schools. The occasional presence of the members of the mother's group provided girls an outlet for issues that male teachers might not have felt comfortable to address. Although the mother's group were able to network with the girls to some extent, their drawback was the lack of social capital that would enable them to address academic issues of the girls. Teachers in this case had more social capital since they were considered specialists in

their profession. Most parents might need adult education classes to build their academic capital.

9. In addition, the study concluded that social interaction was evident at the school level where students interacted with teachers at the classroom level, amongst themselves in the classroom and during play. Some pupils were able to interact through activities at the AIDS club, SCI club, and the Bible club. As well, participants indicated that they played or studied with their siblings and friends. Engaging in such activities might enhance the mental and social capabilities of pupils. As well, social interaction might enable pupils to develop the care capability as they learn to get along with others. In addition, some students indicated that they interacted with relatives outside their villages.

Parents, on the other hand, indicated that their social interaction took place within their families, their immediate communities, as well as with acquaintances outside the communities. Because of their responsibility as parents, they ensured they had networks, which would ensure available help for their families when it was needed. Parents were usually the leaders in the community, as well as the custodians of traditions and providers for their families. Most parents were considered leaders at different levels. As Rose (1997) pointed out, the nature of rural life in Africa and the nature of social capital enabled individuals and households to produce goods and services for their survival (p. 2). Although there were positive aspects of social networks available for communities to meet their needs, there were also some challenges to group interaction. One of the issues that surfaced was the problem of difference because of people's differing values. Participants reiterated that sometimes people favoured those who were like them in terms of economic level, interests, and health. The values that parents

espouse have implications for children's success at home and school. Such situations have implications for raising children because they copy what parents do. For example, if parents instil the values of working hard at school, children might adopt the same value and do well in class. Within families in Malawi, the issue of difference can be problematic when a particular child is more gifted than others. Parents might love the child who seems more promising in terms of passing exams, bringing home financial and other resources. Such treatment might cause the average children to be alienated and withdrawn because they do not feel loved. In the long term, such children fail to accept who they are and through their anger might become abusers of others, including their family members.

10. The study concluded that the trust of familiars, generalized trust, and institutional trust, were evident to a limited extent in both school communities. The trust of familiars was evident among community elders who were assigned responsibilities in the different development committees, which had been established. These findings supported the observations by Rose (1997) who reported that in the African context, informal social networks and formal organizations were used by individuals and households or groups to produce goods and services for their own consumption. Social capital in this context met students' basic needs of food.

As well, generalized trust that is extended to strangers could be considered evident, from the outside organizations, which were working with the communities. Because of the way development projects were being organized from the grassroots, people seemed to trust the outside agencies. In addition, when organizations delivered what they promised, people seemed to develop more trust in them. In this study, the two

school communities also seemed to trust the government field officials who were representing the government during discussions on development plans.

Institutional trust appeared to be lacking in some cases according to the findings in this study. There was a lack of trust of male teachers and older schoolboys by the parents, where adolescent schoolgirls were concerned. The lack of trust of the male population corresponded with the findings of a study conducted by CERT (2000), who found that sexual violence was an issue in some Malawian schools. Sexual violence is prevalent in some situations because Malawi's cultural traditions elevate males at home, at school, and at some work places. From the day they are born, men and boys develop social capital more than females. They are socialized to be leaders in the family, school and other public spaces. Sexual violence is an unfortunate experience for girls and women because when it takes place, whether by rape or coerced sexual relations, the girls and women suffer. The repercussions for the girl child might be early marriage, loss of self- esteem, unplanned pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases. For most women, sexual violence has led to silence due to the shame if one is raped or constant worry if the sexual partner has HIV/AIDS. The lack of protection of the girl child implies that her physical, care, social, and mental capabilities might be dwarfed, thereby robbing her normal life and the realization of her dreams.

11. The study further concluded that the two school communities were in the process of improving some of the external conditions within the school communities. Parents were engaged in the sustainability of some of the food resources, such as developing an orchard and a vegetable garden for the school. Parents also provided materials, such as bricks to build permanent classrooms. This finding echoed Flora's (1994) observation, which stated that in order to ensure healthy, productive, and

enjoyable lives, sustainable communities maintain and improve their social, economic, and environmental characteristics. In order to enhance students' access and retention as well as the quality of life of students in general, the stakeholders identified community needs through the guidance of the development officials at national and international levels. Since schools operate because there are children that need to be taught, the need to develop the mental capabilities of pupils was foremost in the development agenda of the communities. Although the parents have a long-term development agenda for the schools, there is need for immediate projects for profit to be established within the communities to ensure sustainability of the education of the pupils in the two communities.

12. Rose (1997) suggested that relationships as a resource for sustainable development occurred at different level such as household or face-to-face groups in a village or kin or friends. The evidence from the study concluded that relationships were evident between parents/ guardians and their children/ wards, teachers and pupils, teachers and parents, female pupils and the UNICEF mothers' groups, and the development committees. At the parent/ guardian level, parents were responsible for children's needs such as food, shelter, clothes, soap, school materials, and examination fees. Occasionally, there were cases where children lacked parental support in terms of fees or other material needs. While it might be true that the parents might not have money for school fees, there are some instances where parents expect girls to get married by a certain age, especially in rural settings.

13. This study found that most teachers used traditional teaching methods. There were no varied questioning techniques that could challenge the pupils beyond question and answer, as well as rote learning. The teaching styles that teachers engage in has

implications for the development of pupils' mental capabilities of imagination, senses, and thought (Nussbaum, 2001). It seemed that the lack of enthusiasm of the teachers to try other methods was the nature of the syllabus, which was examination oriented. In addition, the large classes might make classroom management difficult. The lack of teaching variety was surprising considering that in the cultural setting people use a lot of small group discussions and probing questions.

While most teachers handled the questioning techniques well, some teachers praised boys and not girls. In some cases, there was little praise for girls who answered questions correctly, while the class clapped for all the boys who gave a correct answer. Although not referring to questioning techniques specifically, Miske and VanBelle-Prouty (1997) referred to some classrooms as "environments of discouragement." Classrooms as environments of discouragement might be characterized by interactions where boys get more attention from the teacher more than girls would (pp. 2-3). Such learning atmospheres prevent girls from developing a positive self-esteem, an aspect of internal capabilities.

From a broader perspective, disorderly and uncomfortable learning conditions might become the indirect cause for disgruntled future citizens, who lack order and respect for others because they have been conditioned to disorder and chaos. The extreme situation might be that "large numbers of poorly educated young people without employment prospects is a recipe for continued poverty, inequality and civil unrest" (p. 5). If we provide better facilities for the youth so that they develop all the skills that they need to operate in society upon completion of schooling, then we are assured national development.

5.7 Re-conceptualization of the Framework

The SCI study was conceptualized using the Capabilities Approach to Development as adapted from Nussbaum & Harcourt (2001) and Sen (1999). In addition, the Social Capital Theory based on Putnam (2000), Coleman (1988), and Uphoff and Khrishna (2002) was utilized. The advantage of using the capability approach was that it is adaptable depending on the variables and context being studied. With regards to the SCI study, the initial conceptual framework (Figure 2.1, p. 70) included the components of the Capability Approach to Development. The first category incorporated basic capabilities (physical health, love, and care); followed by internal capabilities (mental and social/ capable within self, confident, knowledgeable) and finally the external conditions covering (material and institutional environments/ economic and political aspects) which provide the resources that enable individuals to develop (Nussbaum, 2001). Aspects of social capital such as shared values, social interaction, trust, and sustainable communities (Khrishna & Uphoff, 2002; NEF, 2001; Flora, 1994; Putnam, 2000; Coleman, 1998) were also perceived as influencing the well-being of individuals.

Based on the study, the interaction of the capabilities and social capital to achieve human well-being appears to be different from what was originally proposed. In (Figure 2.1, p. 70) it was suggested that the three categories of capabilities interact equally, back and forth. From the findings of the SCI study, it was concluded that the conditions that enhance the development of basic capabilities were inadequate both at home and at school. The conditions that were available were not adequate to ensure that pupils lived to their expected length of life (Nussbaum, 2001; Williams, 2007) nor would it ensure the completion of school, especially for girls. I concluded that students,

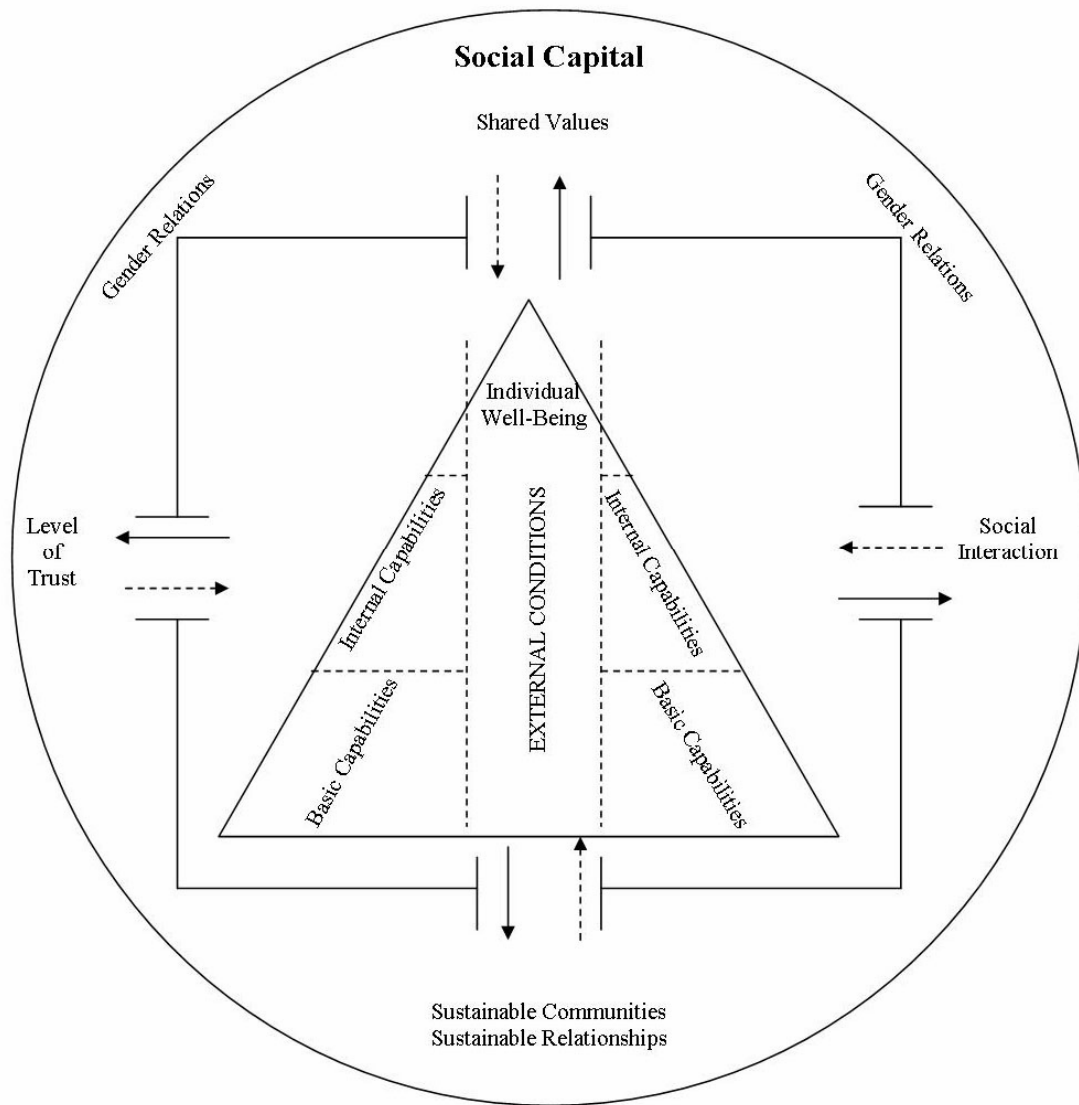
in general, and girls in particular, did not enjoy a good life bodily because of the lack of adequate food, work overload, and sexual violence. It seems that the SCI has sensitized the communities about gender issues to some extent, but due to the various factors examined in this study, it will take time to change cultural values and attitudes. As well, within the school setting, pupils lacked adequate decent learning facilities. In addition, the quality of teaching and learning was in some cases not good. The lack of creative methods of teaching implied that it would be difficult for students to develop the internal capabilities which would enable them to use imagination, develop reasoning, and thinking skills (Nussbaum, 2001). Hence, the available conditions were not sufficiently adequate to influence the development of pupils' basic capabilities, which would later influence the development of their internal capabilities.

External conditions, which refer to institutions such as the home and school that control our ability to access material needs, social interaction, political fulfilment (Nussbaum, 2001) were not able to provide pupils' needs to the maximum. From the results of the study, it was concluded that the combined capabilities pervade the development of both categories of capabilities (basic and internal) and were only somewhat available. At the home front, it was found that in most cases parents/guardians were not able to provide the necessary opportunities for girls to advance in school. Most girls had a heavier workload than boys and usually confined to the home doing house chores. The confinement of girls has implications for their future roles as politicians, who have to interact with others in order to effect change in their communities. While hard work in the home is important, there is need for balance so that girls too, can develop internal capabilities. In some cases, girls might be forced into early marriages as

a solution for the lack of school fees and because of a lack of parental understanding on the importance of educating girls.

The school as a social institution could provide the necessary learning facilities to a certain extent. Both schools could not provide adequate classrooms, desks, books, and female teachers. Girls were disadvantaged due to lack of female role models. Such a situation has an impact on the girls' positive self-esteem.

The final conceptual framework incorporates those elements. As a result, the re-conceptualized framework (Figure 5.1, p. 214) has changed to a pyramid to reflect the shifts. Hence the reconfigured model shows that while there are aspects of social capital available to the two school communities, they are not adequate to enhance the development of all the capabilities. The capability model has been depicted as a pyramid with a wide base that represents the development of basic capabilities (health, love, and care). The development of the basic capabilities might enable pupils to achieve the internal capabilities (capable within self, confident, knowledgeable). From the findings of the study I noticed that stakeholders were to a large extent engaged in providing the external conditions of food, shelter, and care through the guidance and funding from government, development agencies, and the SCI programme. Funding organizations were working towards food sufficiency, availability of classrooms, encouraging girls through the UNICEF mother's group. It was hoped that the SCI would sensitize people on the need for gender equality, which would also ensure the safety of girls from sexual harassment. The focus on the provision of the external conditions that would ensure the



*Figure 5.1: The Interrelationship between Capabilities and Social Capital
[Adapted from Harcourt & Nussbaum (2001); Sen (1999)]*

working towards food sufficiency, availability of classrooms, encouraging girls through the UNICEF mother's group. It was hoped that the SCI would sensitize people on the

The development of internal capabilities is a significant part of student achievement and it is enhanced by external conditions in the form of economic and

political institutions that provide the resources that enable the achievement of different individual capabilities. While material and institutional environments such as the home, school, hospitals, courts and other institutions might be available to support pupils, it is hoped that if pupils develop internal capabilities, they will in turn be able to contribute to the operation of the institutions as agents of change. An example of students as agents of change is the membership in the SCI clubs, which enables pupils to learn to interact with others as well as disseminate SCI messages. In addition, if pupils have developed internal capabilities, they might freely express their needs, for instance, when girls were made to sit on the ground and boys on desks. After ensuring that all the levels of the capability pyramid have been developed, it is expected that pupils will achieve individual well-being, which refers to “a happy healthy, and prosperous state or condition....” (The Canadian Oxford Dictionary, p. 1649). The maintenance of this level requires supportive networks. As the outer space of Figure 5.1 indicates, there was some evidence of social capital tenets, which are critical for individual wellbeing.

5.8 Implications of the Study

The following sections deal with the implications of the study for theory, research, and practice.

5.8.1 For Theory

The implications for theory are presented according to how the findings reflect with, supplement, and connect to theories engaged with gender studies, capabilities approach to development, and social capital.

5.8.1.1 Gender relations theory

The findings from the SCI study seemed to indicate that the demands of culture and tradition determine how a girl is raised at home and how she is treated in the school

setting by teachers who have been raised within similar cultural settings. With regards to gender relations, the findings in the study reflected some of the tenets as stated by Kenway and Modra (1992) who indicated that “feminists” believe that women experience gender inequalities in the form of devaluation, exploitation and oppression. According to Kenway and Modra, social institutions such as the home, schools, and other public spaces perpetuate gender inequalities. They further stated that feminists have a vision of a world, which is equitable for both females and males (p. 139). Munanthoko (1992) also stated that “feminists” have questioned and challenged the origins of oppressive relations and have attempted to propose strategies for improving relations for the better.

While gender relations theory suggests an equitable world, the SCI study in Malawi, revealed the presence of a very patriarchal society. Based on my findings of this study, girls were discriminated by gender, through the allocation of heavy workload and other practices. At puberty, when girls begin to menstruate, it is a sign of adulthood. Girls are assigned household tasks of caring for younger siblings and serving males. The findings from this study agreed with a study conducted by Hari (1997), who found that low enrolment and high dropout rates of girls was due to the negative attitude that parents had towards educating girls. As well, traditional socio-cultural beliefs and values regarding gender roles and abilities have influenced parental attitude towards girls’ education. Women are viewed as nurturing beings and as such were expected to be homemakers and carers of children. Hari further reported that some parents were reluctant to send their daughters to school because of the corrupting influences of male teachers and students who interacted with the girls. Some parents further indicated that

educating girls was a waste of money because when they marry, they will benefit the families they marry into.

The findings of this study also resonated with gender relations theory according to Fox (1999), who reported that in most developing countries of the world, the ideal woman is conceptualized as powerless, subordinate, and dependent. From this study, parents seemed to conceptualize an ideal woman as one who was able to develop skills of home care at an early age. This was demonstrated when some parents delayed girls' enrolment. The woman was able to survive in life even if formal schooling failed. As well, the parents conceptualized the woman as powerful in protecting their daughters at school. The female teacher would present a powerful presence because of her status. It seemed the situation was difficult to balance considering how some parents assigned heavy workload to the daughters.

Students seemed to conceptualize the ideal woman as a model who could demonstrate positive aspects like Sara. This ideal woman was courageous, persistent, professional, and powerful. The attributes of the ideal woman were evident from the list of occupations that girls aspired to undertake when they completed school. As well, the data from the open-ended item of the student questionnaire, girls were able to explain their experiences about schooling. Although girls aspired to achieve, their immediate environment did not seem supportive, for example, when some teachers assigned girls to sit on the ground, while boys sat on desks. In this case, girls were powerless to argue for half the number of desks. The physical arrangements devalued the girls while elevating the status of boys. In a situation where girls were empowered to some extent, they would have demanded to occupy half of the number of the available desks.

Teachers seemed sensitized to gender issues and this was demonstrated through encouraging girls to participate and perform equally as the boys in class. On the other hand, parents did not trust teachers and older boys with their adolescent daughters because they considered the girls powerless to the sexual advances of males. Such behaviours seemed to portray girls, who later became women as powerless, subordinate and dependent. To that extent, girls and women were portrayed as objects.

5.8.1.2 Capability development theory

Karnegie and Dulk (1996-2001) refer to the rights theory as a basis for the SCI comic books. Among the *rights of the child* that are emphasized are “the rights to information, freedom of thought and expression, respect for views and participation of the child in decisions which affect his or her own future” (p. 7). Nussbaum (2001) suggested that although rights have been established for a long time, it is better to think of them in terms of capabilities. She argued that in order to secure a right for a citizen it is necessary to ensure that they have internal powers and are in an environment that will enable their capabilities to function (pp. 58-59). Sen’s (1999) theory of the capability approach to development proposed the development of all the areas of human experience. Sen’ approach resonates with Nussbaum’s proposal. When governments spend money on education, health and hunger, they build the foundations that will enable people to develop capabilities, which foster economic development and economic freedom.

Apparent in the SCI study was that capability development was more important than the other variables such as gender relations and social capital. While the two school communities valued education, they were concerned about the physical needs of food for their children, hence the parents’ involvement in the UNICEF and UNFPA feeding

programmes. As well, parents wanted to ensure that girls were safe from sexual abuses. The findings of the SCI agreed with Unterhalter (2000), who argued that while the capability development considers education as (1) social opportunity, (2) a valuable outcome (literacy and skills), and (3) a causality of freedom, expanding educational opportunities does not guarantee that individuals would acquire human capabilities. There is need to consider the safety of the school environment to ensure successful development of the capabilities. She further noted that although girls' enrolment had been increasing, the human capabilities of women had not expanded. Miske and VanBelle- Prouty (1997) referred to such situations in classrooms as "environments of discouragement."

In a similar observation, Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1997), examined how women's performance might be impacted by the gender inequities that are evident in higher education. They established that women have their own ways of knowing, which is not respected in the traditional academic circles. Some women that were interviewed expressed that, if the specialists and authoritative people in their lives could have provided them with "connected teaching," it would have made a difference in their lives. Connected teaching scrutinizes the needs and the capacities of the learner and fashions a message that is proper to the learner. Hence, a friendly and caring learning environment, which enables every pupil to learn, is created.

The findings on the physical care capabilities have implications for the integrity of the female body. Although communities have been sensitized on the drawbacks of gender discrimination, pupils and parents pointed out that there was evidence of sexual abuses of girls within the two school communities. It seems that the body of a girl/woman is not attributed the integrity it deserves. Women are viewed as material.

From home to school, in marriage, girls seem to be owned by whomever is in charge of the particular institution. Such a scenario has implications for the spread of the HIV/AIDS scourge, which is impacting the well being of most citizens in many countries of the world. AIDS mostly affects women and girls because they are among the powerless groups in the world. Orphaned children are sometimes withdrawn from school, and are considered tools. If the children have lost both parents and live in a sibling home, some adults who pretend to be care givers might take advantage of them through sexual exploitation and cheat them of their wages (Lewis, 2005). The lack of economic, social, and psychological stability can and has caused many of the orphans to fall through the cracks of society. That is why it is imperative that Malawi society work aggressively to rescue mothers and children from impoverishment so that they can develop their individual capabilities that can assist in personal and national development.

5.8.1.3 Social capital theory

The findings of this study contribute to our understanding of social capital. It was noted that pupils developed social capital through friendships that provided them emotional support. Through the established friendships, children were also advised, helped, and cared for. The findings suggested that pupils of Eastern and Southern schools shared similar social capital experiences. Pupils indicated that they had friends to visit, to play with talk to and study with at home and at school. The only difference was for girls, who indicated that they had fewer playtimes compared to boys because they had more household chores. In terms of sexual concerns, parents from the two schools indicated that they were responsible for arranging for relatives of good standing who could advise their children. Within the two school communities, parents no longer

organized communal initiation ceremonies for the adolescent boys and girls for their passage into adulthood. Currently, each family organizes private initiations for their children. While the situation seemed to go against social interaction, which is an important aspect of community life in most rural communities of Malawi, it might be a sign that people are changing their values concerning how adolescents should be initiated into adulthood.

While Whiting and Harper (2003) in their study of *Young People and Social Capital*, found that young people based their trust on their friendships and not at the community level, pupils at Eastern and Southern schools based their trust on friendships, as well as the larger community. The findings of this study suggested that students trusted their adult neighbours and felt free to ask for help in the absence of their parents and guardians. The above finding resonate with Sergiovanni (1994) who stated the importance of community because it is a tie that binds students and teachers together. As well, community gives us a sense of belonging and is universal. We feel connected to others, to ideas, and values, which make our lives meaningful. When we lose community, we lose meaning to life. Although it is assumed that most rural people trust each other, sometimes when people are too poor they are suspected of witchcraft and become alienated from their communities (Cleaver, 2002). In such cases people fail to develop social relationships that can assist them when they are in need. In the case of the SCI study, parents indicated that sickness such as HIV/AIDS can cause alienation within the family, school, and larger community.

Parents' perceptions of social capital were examined through *shared values, social interaction, trust, and sustainable communities*. As noted by Khrishna and Uphoff (2002), *shared values* fall within the cognitive forms of social capital. The two

communities demonstrated shared values through the different activities that they engaged in through the formal social networks that were established at the school level. Social capital in this case was a community resource. Parents engaged in the school projects as members of the wider community with a stake in the schools.

Parents indicated that *social interaction* was evident in their development groups at the school as well as within the wider community. Some of the interactions were based on gender, for example, it was only women who were engaged in the UNICEF Mother's group to address some of the issues that girls experienced in the absence of female teachers. The canteen group, which was responsible for distributing monthly rations to girls, comprised mixed gender because the men were needed to ensure security in the storage of the foodstuff. The joint involvement of men and women in development activities is crucial in ensuring collaboration and ownership when projects or programs are expedited.

The findings suggested that *trust*, was an important element of social capital. Participants indicated that they trusted fellow committee members and their community leaders, such as village chiefs and headmen. Although parents respected their teachers as education experts, they were concerned with the lack of female teachers who were usually considered guardians of adolescent girls. Parents worried about their adolescent daughters because girls who start menstruating are considered adults and they sexually attract male pupils and teachers. Unterhalter (2001), in her quest for gender justice, reiterated that young South African black girls experienced high levels of sexual violence at school. In agreement with Nussbaum (2001), Unterhalter presented a disturbing trend of gender violence in most schools of the Sub-Saharan Africa. In Malawi, the Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (2001) found a growing trend

of gender violence in homes, at schools, market places, and other public spaces. While the purpose of school is to gain knowledge and skills, and finally find jobs, for these girls, the end result of their schooling might mean loss of life.

As noted by Flora (1994), *sustainable communities*, an aspect of social capital, is characterized by people, materials, organizations, and relationships. The findings of the SCI study revealed the attempts by the local communities, the government, and funding agencies to improve the situation of pupils in the schools. The collaborative efforts of all stakeholders were making some difference in the lives of pupils. Among the improvements that were evident were the availability of some permanent classrooms, the rub-hall improvised classrooms, the school feeding programmes, and UNICEF mother's group. The engagement of external resources within the two communities, qualified the two school communities as sustainable to some extent (Flora, 1994).

Although some experts in social capital and sustainable development assert that the failure to implement sustainable development is a social problem, which refers to "democratic systems of governance" (Onyx, 2006), in the case of Malawi, the challenge seems to be economic. There is considerable pressure on parents to contribute to rural development, but sometimes there is no funding to assist the willing parents. As well, Dixon- Fyle (2002) observed the depletion of social capital due to the AIDS epidemic in Malawi and most African countries. Although the parents in the two rural communities were willing to assist in development projects, they were concerned about developing their own economic resources. At the time of the study, people were struggling with famine. The maize that they had grown had dried due to the drought that hit a large area of Malawi. The lack of adequate food coupled with the poor economy had created a trap for most of the members of the two rural school communities. The implications of the

lack of the sustainable economic resources were that girls were unable to progress in school because as mothers struggled to find resources for their households, daughters were deputized to assist with mother's chores (Chimombo, et al. (2000). In the process, girls missed classes, which led to failure and later, in dropping out of school.

5.8.2 For Policy and Practice

There were several issues that existed in the two school communities that were not favourable for effective schooling experiences of pupils. In order to learn effectively, students require a decent infrastructure, reasonable pupil-teacher ratio, adequate learning materials, supportive families and communities, good nutrition and health, and adequate social capital.

5.8.2.1 Infrastructure

The first impression of the two school settings was the lack of adequate classrooms, especially at Southern School. Although the weather was conducive to learning, the situation would not work as well during the rainy season. A good classroom should be sheltered from the environmental elements, have adequate furniture, good ventilation, and adequate space. As well, the schools need adequate textbooks, electronic equipment such as tape recorders and radios. Such characteristics were not available for many of the classes. While Eastern school had a rub-hall, which housed four classes, the absence of classroom partitions made it difficult for pupils to concentrate. Funds permitting, the government and AID agencies should plan to build more classrooms soon. In addition, there is a general lack of adequate and decent housing for teachers of both schools. Although the schools need more teachers, especially female, the lack of good housing is one of the drawbacks for attracting them.

5.8.2.2 Teacher- pupil ratio

Pupils need adequate teacher contact in order to feel they belong. In the two schools, classes were generally large. Southern school had a class of up to 60 or more pupils, learning outside, in a temporary shelter. Such a situation was not conducive to successful learning. While both schools were in need of additional permanent classrooms, Southern school was more desperate. Considering the large school population, there was need for more permanent classrooms, which could protect pupils from the unpredictable and sometimes harsh climate. It is hoped that the Malawi government and AID agencies will continue to collaborate in the development of rural schools through the provision of decent classrooms. From the parents' focus group meetings, participants pointed out that they were ready to assist where they could to ensure their children received a good education.

In Malawi, most teachers who teach in rural areas take risks when accepting positions to teach in some rural school communities. When I worked in Malawi as a teacher supervisor, I came across schools that were so isolated that they were not accessible during the rainy season. In order to buy their provisions or to have access to certain social services, people of that community had to walk across the river with the water rising above their waists. The outcome of low status and hardships that teachers experience in rural areas is that some parents and pupils do not see the value of education. Some parents, who often look down on teachers, might own a few heads of cattle, an ox drawn cart, or bicycle. At the village level, such materials are considered a sign of prosperity. If parents persist in looking down on teachers, then children do not take school seriously either. If pupils and parents do not appreciate formal schooling, then the SCI might be seen as no more than entertainment for some members of the

community. The result is that the SCI might have little genuine effect and students will continue to withdraw from school so that they can work at home or in the fields. In addition, teachers sometimes do not only need money or material incentives, they need supervisors and monitors to motivate them.

5.8.2.3 Female teachers as role models

Schools as communities are expected to maintain close links between the teachers and students. One of the ways such a situation can be achieved is through shared values and ideals which teachers pass on to pupils through class interaction and other informal school activities. To ensure similar experiences between boys and girls, school staff should as much as possible be balanced by gender. Such was not the situation at the two schools. One school had one untrained female teacher, while the other school had no female presence. Parents were concerned about the lack of adequate female teachers because they feared that male teachers and older boys might sexually abuse their adolescent daughters. Although UNICEF mothers' groups were organized for the schools, they could not afford to be at the school all the time. There is still need for the government to train more female teachers and encourage the trained teachers to take positions in the rural schools so they might motivate girls to work hard through their example.

5.8.2.4 Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) materials

Another issue that featured highly was the need for the provision of more materials for the SCI so that they could be used for sensitizing the communities surrounding the schools. As well, if adequate comic books were provided, they might be used as supplementary reading material for pupils. Because of the pictures

accompanying the text, pupils might be motivated to enjoy reading, while assimilating the SCI messages.

5.8.2.5 Work overload

Since work overload for girls continued to feature highly during data analysis, there might be need for the school staff, parents, and the school committee to discuss how they might ensure that girls' work load is reasonable. Parents, teachers, and the school committee might need to decide what workload is reasonable for both boys and girls.

5.8.2.6 In-service

Teacher in-service is one of the greatest needs of Malawian teachers. From the observations conducted in this study, there is need for more in-service to encourage teachers to vary methods of teaching despite the challenges they might be experiencing such as large classes, lack of adequate infrastructure and inadequate teaching and learning materials.

5.8.3 For Further Research

In this study, I have endeavoured to come to an understanding of the impact of the SCI programmes in two rural school communities in Malawi. The purpose of the study was to establish stakeholders' perceptions about different aspects of the SCI and the extent that the social capital and capabilities of girls had been enhanced. The study revealed that gender discrimination was evident in interactions at home and within the school setting. As well, it was found that there was limited social capital and development of the capabilities at home and at school at home and at school for girls and it was necessary to address some of the problems.

There is need for further research in the following areas:

1. Further research is required within the home setting to determine the nature of gender relations that girls experience and to what level.

2. There is need to examine the workload for girls compared to boys in a given day.

3. In the two school communities, there is need to further study the impact of HIV/AIDS, on the pupil population, the school staff, and finally, at the community level. HIV/AIDS should be studied in depth within the two school communities to determine how orphans and their guardians are being impacted. Although the study revealed several factors that impact on pupils' progress in school, an in depth study of victims of HIV/AIDS might also help to give a balanced view of the situation.

4. The study has also highlighted the need for investigation on how widely spread hunger is within the school communities, especially among girls.

5. There is need for a comparative study of schools based in all the three regions of Malawi to determine how other school communities are operating with regards to the SCI. As well, there might be need to find out if there are other intervention programs that operate in the district, which might be overlapping with the SCI. The advantage of being aware might be that the SCI would be able to learn from the other programs. In addition, the intervention programs might benefit from facilities that are available, especially in terms of personnel at district level and school level and other resources.

5.9 Final Words

In this study, the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) enabled me to describe the problems that girls experienced in the two research communities. The perspectives of pupils, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders of the SCI were examined through the lenses of gender relations, the capability approach to development, and social capital.

It was concluded that while the SCI enhanced the social capital for girls, in all likelihood the community members required attitudinal and cultural change. As well, the study concluded that pupils have the capabilities that can be developed to enable them to function in society. In order to realize such status, there is need to break down social structures and values that prevent pupils' and especially girls' advancement in education.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Ethics Approval



**UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD**
<http://www.usask.ca/research/ethics.shtml>

NAME: Larry Sackney (Lillian Sankhulani)
Educational Administration


Beh #04-184

DATE: October 6, 2004

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the Application for Ethics Approval for your study "Achieving Gender Equity through UNICEF Intervention: The Effect of the Sara Communication Initiative in two Malawian School Communities" (Beh #04-184).

1. Your study has been APPROVED.
2. Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Committee consideration in advance of its implementation.
3. The term of this approval is for 5 years.
4. This approval is valid for one year. A status report form must be submitted annually to the Chair of the Committee in order to extend approval. This certificate will automatically be invalidated if a status report form is not received within one month of the anniversary date. Please refer to the website for further instructions
<http://www.usask.ca/research/behavrsc.shtml>

I wish you a successful and informative study.


Dr. Valerie Thompson, Chair
University of Saskatchewan
Behavioural Research Ethics Board

VT/ek

Office of Research Services, University of Saskatchewan
Room 1607, 110 Gymnasium Place, Box 5000 RPO University, Saskatoon SK S7N 4J8 CANADA
Telephone: (306) 966-8576 Facsimile: (306) 966-8597
<http://www.usask.ca/research>

**APPENDIX B: Request to the Ministry of Education Headquarters to Conduct
the Study**

July 30, 2004.

801-107 Cumberland Ave. S
Saskatoon, SK
S7N 2R6

The Secretary for Education
Private Bag 328
Capital City
Lilongwe 3, Malawi
South East Africa
(Attention: Director for Basic Education)

Dear Sir/Madam:

Re: A STUDY OF THE SARA COMMUNICATION INITIATIVE (SCI)

My name is Lillian Sankhulani. I am currently working toward a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Educational Administration. I write to request approval to proceed with my proposed research topic: *Achieving Gender Equality through UNICEF Intervention: The Effect of the Sara Communication Initiative on Students of Selected Malawian Schools*. I will engage pupils, parents, and teachers of the selected primary school communities, which were introduced to the SCI.

My research will be conducted in two selected schools that have been introduced to the Sara Communication Initiative in Chikwawa district. The schools were identified because of their accessibility and convenience.

I will obtain information from the participants using questionnaires for students, and semi-structured interviews from head teachers, teachers, the United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) representative in Malawi, the Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi (FAWEMA) coordinator, and focus groups from parents. In addition, I would also like to have access to the students' grades and other documents at the two schools.

I look forward to your favourable consideration of this application.

Yours sincerely,

Lillian Sankhulani (Mrs)
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX C: Permission to Conduct Research in Chikwawa

ograms: MINED LILONGWE
ephone: +265 1 789422
K: +265 1 788064/164

mmunications should be addressed to:
Secretary for Education



In reply please quote No.....

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
PRIVATE BAG 328
CAPITAL CITY
LILONGWE 3
MALAWI

DP2/134/10

18th January, 2005

Lilian Sankhulani(Mrs)
C/o Mr. E.J. Sankhulani
The Malawi Polytechnic
P/Bag 303
Chichiri
Blantyre 3

Dear Madam,

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN TWO SELECTED SCHOOLS IN CHIKWAWA

With reference to your letter dated 30th December, 2004
please find attached a copy of authority to enable you undertake
your research.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Makalande', with a horizontal line above it.

M. Makalande

For: **SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION**


APPENDIX C- PAGE 2



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that the bearer of this letter has authority from the Ministry Headquarters to conduct research on Achieving Gender Equality through UNICEF Intervention in two selected schools in Chikwawa district.

Please assist him/her.



M. Makalade

For: SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION

APPENDIX D: Letter of Transmittal

July 30, 2004.

801-107 Cumberland Ave. S
Saskatoon, SK
S7N 2R6

The District Education officer
P.O. Box 34
Chikwawa, Malawi
South East Africa

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: A STUDY OF THE SARA COMMUNICATION INITIATIVE (SCI)

My name is Lillian Sankhulani. I am currently working towards a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada. I write to request the participation of students, teachers, and parents in the selected primary school communities, which were introduced to the SCI in Chikwawa district. My proposed research topic is: *Achieving Gender Equality through UNICEF Intervention: The Effect of the Sara Communication Initiative on Students of Selected Malawian Schools*. The study will provide information that will be useful in the on-going implementation of the initiative countrywide.

Information will be collected from the participants using questionnaires for students, interviews for head teachers, teachers, and focus groups for parents. The information that they provide will be useful in the evaluation of the program and addressing many other issues, such as improving the administration of the SCI. Therefore, the completion of the questionnaire and the responses to the interviews would be appreciated.

Finally, I have requested pupils and the coordinating teachers to identify their schools on the questionnaire, but this will not put them at risk or threaten their privacy when I obtain responses. I will keep all replies anonymous. Your school's identity is necessary only for data collection purposes and will not be released to any other persons.

Yours sincerely,

L.E. Sankhulani (Mrs)
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX E: Consent Form for Head Teachers and Chairperson of the Parent- Teacher Association (PTA)

My name is Lillian Sankhulani. I am currently working towards a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada. I write to request the participation of your pupils in my research, entitled, *Achieving Gender Equality through UNICEF Intervention: The Effect of the Sara Communication Initiative on Students of Selected Malawian Schools*. The study will provide information that will be useful in the on-going implementation of the initiative countrywide.

If students agree to participate, they will be asked to spare approximately half an hour to one hour of their time to respond to a questionnaire. In addition, the researcher will observe selected classes. Their participation in this activity is entirely voluntary and they will not be penalized if they refuse to participate. They can withdraw from the study at any time.

The anonymity of the students will be maintained by using pseudonyms. Their identity will be revealed only to the researcher. The answers that they give will not be shared or presented in any way that would identify them as respondents.

At the conclusion of this study, the information will be compiled and distributed to the educational institutions in Malawi and other interested organizations. UNICEF, coordinating teachers of SCI clubs, and policy makers in the Ministry of Education will use the results of this study.

If you have any questions or concerns about the project itself or the methods used, please contact:

Mrs. Lillian Sankhulani (Researcher)
801-107 Cumberland Ave. S
Saskatoon, SK.
Canada S7N 2R6

Phone: 1(306)373-7296

E-mail: lis835@mail.usask.ca

Dr. Larry Sackney (Supervisor)
Dept. of Admin. & Educational
College of Education
University of Saskatchewan
28 Campus Drive
Saskatoon, SK

Phone: 1(306) 966-7626 (O)

Fax: 1(306) 966-7020 (O)

E-mail: larry.sackney@usask.ca

Having understood the above information and after being given an opportunity to have my questions answered, I agree that my students may participate in this study.

Signature of head teacher _____ Date _____

Signature of PTA chairperson _____ Date _____

Signature of researcher _____ Date _____

APPENDIX F: Consent Form for Coordinating Teachers

My name is Lillian Sankhulani. I am currently working towards a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada. I write to request your participation in my research entitled, *Achieving Gender Equality through UNICEF Intervention: The Effect of the Sara Communication Initiative on Students of Selected Malawian Schools*. The study will provide information that will be useful in the on-going implementation of the initiative countrywide.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to spare approximately one hour of your time to respond to interview questions from the researcher. In addition, the researcher will observe selected classes. Your participation in this activity is entirely voluntary and you will not be penalized if you refuse to participate.

Your anonymity will be maintained by a pseudonym and your identity will be revealed only to the researcher. The answers that you give will not be shared or presented in any way that would identify you as the respondent.

At the conclusion of this study, the information will be compiled in the form of a dissertation and distributed to the educational institutions in Malawi and other interested organizations. UNICEF, coordinating teachers of SCI clubs, and policy makers in the Ministry of Education will use the results of this study.

If you have any questions or concerns about the project itself or the methods used, please contact:

Mrs. Lillian Sankhulani (Researcher)
801-107 Cumberland Ave. S
Saskatoon, SK
Canada S7N 2R6

Dr. Larry Sackney (Supervisor)
Dept. of Educational Administration
College of Education
University of Saskatchewan
28 Campus Drive
Saskatoon SK
Canada S7N 0X1

Phone: 1(306)374-3885

Phone: 1 (306) 966-7626 (O)

Fax: 1 (306) 966- 7020 (O)

E-mail: lis835@mail.usask.ca

E-mail: larry.sackney@usask.ca

Having understood the above information and after being given an opportunity to have my questions answered, I agree to participate in this study.

Signature of Coordinating Teacher _____ Date _____

Signature of researcher _____ Date _____

APPENDIX G: Consent Form for Pupils

My name is Mrs. L. Sankhulani. I am currently working towards a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada. I write to request your participation in my research entitled, *Achieving Gender Equality through UNICEF Intervention: The Effect of the Sara Communication Initiative on Students of Selected Malawian Schools*. The study will provide information that will be useful in the on-going implementation of the initiative countrywide.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to spare approximately half an hour to one hour of your time to respond to the questionnaire. In addition, the researcher will observe selected classes. Please be advised that I will also access to your grades in this study, but they will be used for general reporting without identifying you. Your participation in this activity is entirely voluntary and you will not be penalized if you refuse to participate.

Your anonymity will be maintained by using a pseudonym. The answers that you give will not be shared or presented in any way that would identify you as the respondent.

At the conclusion of this study, the information will be compiled and distributed to the educational institutions in Malawi and other interested organizations. UNICEF, coordinating teachers of SCI clubs, and policy makers in the Ministry of Education will use the results of this study.

If you have any questions or concerns about the project itself or the methods used, please contact:

Mrs. Lillian Sankhulani (Researcher)
801-107 Cumberland Ave S
Saskatoon, SK
Canada S7N 2R6

Dr. Larry Sackney (Supervisor)
Dept. of Educational Administration
College of Education
University of Saskatchewan
28 Campus Drive
Saskatoon SK
Canada S7N 0X1 CA

Phone: 1(306) 374-3885

Phone: 1 (306) 966-7626 (O)

Fax: 1 (306) 966- 7020 (O)

E-mail: lis835@mail.usask.ca

E-mail: larry.sackney@usask.ca

.....
Having understood the above information and after being given an opportunity to have my questions answered, I agree to participate in this study.

Signature of student _____ Date _____

Signature of researcher _____ Date _____

APPENDIX H: Data/Transcript Release Form for Interview Participants

Dear _____,

Your participation in the study, *Achieving Gender Equality through UNICEF Intervention: The Effect of One Segment of the Sara Communication Initiative on Students in Selected Malawian Schools* is greatly appreciated. The form below has been prepared to ensure that the information in the interview transcript, which you provided for this study, is accurate. If you are comfortable that the information in the transcript is accurate, fill the form below.

I, _____, have reviewed the completed transcript of my personal interview and any focus groups with which I may have been a part of during this study. I accept that the transcripts accurately reflect what I said in my interviews with Mrs. L. Sankhulani.

I authorize the researcher to use any information that I have provided for this study.

I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Mrs. L. Sankhulani to be used in the manner described in the letter of consent.

I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript release Form for my own records.

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature

Date _____

Date _____

Thank you for your participation in this study. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

APPENDIX I: Consent Form for FAWEMA and UNICEF Representatives

Dear _____,

My name is Lillian Sankhulani. I am currently working towards a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada. I write to request your participation in my research entitled, *Achieving Gender Equality through UNICEF Intervention: The Effect of the Sara Communication Initiative on Students of Selected Malawian Schools*. The purpose of this study is to determine to what extent the SCI is a vehicle that has enabled girls, within the two rural communities of Chikwawa district, to develop the necessary capabilities that will enable them to contribute to Chikwawa's social capital.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to spare approximately one hour of your time to respond to my interview questions. The interview questions will mostly be based on your experiences coordinating the SCI activities and your assessment of the SCI in Malawi, since its introduction.

Your participation in this activity is entirely voluntary. Your anonymity will be maintained by using pseudonyms and only your views and not your identity will be revealed.

At the conclusion of this study, the information will be compiled and disseminated in the form of a Dissertation to the educational institutions in Malawi and other interested organizations. It is hoped that UNICEF, coordinating teachers of SCI clubs, and policy makers in the Ministry of Education will use the results of this study.

If you have any questions or concerns about the project itself or the methods used, please contact:

Mrs. Lillian Sankhulani (Researcher)
801-107 Cumberland Ave. S
Saskatoon, SK.
Canada S7N 2R6

Dr. Larry Sackney (Supervisor)
Dept. of Admin. & Educational
College of Education
University of Saskatchewan
28 Campus Drive
Saskatoon, SK
Canada S7N 0X1

Phone: 1(306)373-7296

Phone: 1(306) 966-7626 (O)

Fax: 1(306) 966-7020 (O)

E-mail: lis835@mail.usask.ca

E-mail: larry.sackney@usask.ca

Having understood the above information and after being given an opportunity to have my questions answered, I agree to participate in this study.

Signature of FAWEMA/

UNICEF representative _____ Date: _____

Signature of researcher _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX J: Consent Form for Parents' Focus Group

My name is Lillian Sankhulani. I am currently working towards a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada. I write to request your participation in my research entitled, *Achieving Gender Equality through UNICEF Intervention: The Effect of the Sara Communication Initiative on Students of Selected Malawian Schools*. The study will provide information that will be useful in the on-going implementation of the initiative countrywide.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to spare approximately one to one and half-hours of your time to take part in a focus group discussion. In addition, be advised that I will tape-record the discussions to enable me analyze the issues more efficiently. Your participation in this activity is entirely voluntary and you will not be penalized if you refuse to participate.

Your anonymity will be maintained by using a pseudonym. The answers that you give will not be shared or presented in any way that would identify you as the respondent.

At the conclusion of this study, the information will be compiled and distributed to the educational institutions in Malawi and other interested organizations. UNICEF, coordinating teachers of SCI clubs, and policy makers in the Ministry of Education will use the results of this study.

If you have any questions or concerns about the project itself or the methods used, please contact:

Mrs. Lillian Sankhulani (Researcher)
801-107 Cumberland Ave S
Saskatoon, SK
Canada S7N 2R6

Phone: 1(306) 374-3885

E-mail: lis835@mail.usask.ca

Dr. Larry Sackney (Supervisor)
Dept. of Educational Administration
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University of Saskatchewan
28 Campus Drive
Saskatoon SK
Canada S7N 0X1 CA

Phone: 1 (306) 966-7626 (O)

Fax: 1 (306) 966- 7020 (O)

E-mail: larry.sackney@usask.ca

.....
Group Agreement for Maintaining Confidentiality

Having understood the above information and after being given an opportunity to have my questions answered, I agree to participate in this study. I hereby affirm that I will not communicate or in any manner disclose publicly information discussed during the course of this focus group interview. I agree not to talk about material relating to this study or interview with anyone outside of my fellow focus group members and the researcher [or moderator].

Signature of parent _____ Date _____

Signature of researcher _____ Date _____
.....

Adapted from B. L. Berg, (2001) *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*

APPENDIX K: Consent Form for the Moderator of the Parents' Focus Group

My name is Lillian Sankhulani. I am currently working towards a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada. I write to request your participation as a moderator for the parents' focus group interviews in my research entitled, *Achieving Gender Equality through UNICEF Intervention: The Effect of the Sara Communication Initiative on Students of Selected Malawian Schools*. The study will provide information that will be useful in the on-going implementation of the initiative countrywide.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to spare approximately two hours of your time to moderate the parents' focus group discussion, while I take notes, by hand, as well as using the tape recorder. Your participation in this activity is entirely voluntary and you will not be penalized if you refuse to participate.

Your anonymity will be maintained by using a pseudonym. At the conclusion of this study, the information will be compiled and distributed to the educational institutions in Malawi and other interested organizations. UNICEF, coordinating teachers of SCI clubs, and policy makers in the Ministry of Education will use the results of this study.

If you have any questions or concerns about the project itself or the methods used, please contact:

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801-107 Cumberland Ave S
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Fax: 1 (306) 966- 7020 (O)

E-mail: larry.sackney@usask.ca

.....
Group Agreement for Maintaining Confidentiality

Having understood the above information and after being given an opportunity to have my questions answered, I agree to participate in this study. I hereby affirm that I will not communicate or in any manner disclose publicly information discussed during the course of this focus group interview. I agree not to talk about material relating to this study or interview with anyone other than the researcher.

Signature of moderator _____ Date _____

Signature of researcher _____ Date _____

.....
Adapted from B. L. Berg, (2001) *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*

APPENDIX L: The Questionnaire for Girls and Boys

Instruction: Please, provide us with the requested information.

Section A, questions 1 – 7, allows you to tell about yourself by filling in the blank spaces. The information is necessary to allow us to come back to you for follow-up information if necessary. Be assured that all the information will be treated anonymously and confidentially.

Section B, questions 8 – 18, asks information about the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI), which you are involved in.

Section C, questions 19- 27, asks information about some gender issues in general.

Section A

Demographic Data

Instruction: Please, circle the appropriate answer.

1. What is the name of your school? _____
2. In which class, are you? Standard _____
3. How old are you? _____
4. What is your gender? Girl Boy
5. What is your mother's occupation?
 - a) Farmer
 - b) Stay at home mother/ housewife
 - c) Teacher
 - d) Nurse/ Birth attendant/ midwife
 - e) Social worker
 - f) Other. (Please specify) _____
6. What is your father's occupation?
 - a) Farmer
 - b) Teacher
 - c) Chief
 - d) Businessman
 - e) Court Clerk
 - f) Carpenter
 - g) Other. (Please specify) _____

7. What are your career aspirations?

I want to be:

- a) An engineer
- b) A farmer
- c) A postmaster
- d) A policeman
- e) A nurse/ doctor/ teacher
- f) Other. (Please specify) _____

Section B

I will now ask you questions about the first episode of SCI, *The Special Gift*.

Instruction: Please, respond to the following items:

8. a) Did you **see, listen to, or read** the first episode of the SCI?

I have

- i) seen
- ii) listened to
- iii) read

the first episode of SCI. (You may circle more than one)

9. How long have you been involved with the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI)?

- a) 1 year
- b) 2 years
- c) 3 years
- d) 4 years
- e) Greater than 4 _____

10. When was the SCI introduced in your school? _____

11. Which episodes of Sara have you been introduced to? (You may circle more than one)

- a) The Special Gift
- b) Sara Saves her Friend
- c) The Lioness's Daughter
- d) The Trap
- e) Choices
- f) The Empty Compound
- g) Other. (Please specify) _____

12. a) How many times per week do you meet for the SCI?

- i) Once
- ii) Twice

- iii) Thrice
- iv) Four times
- v) Five times
- vi) Greater than 5 times _____

b) How long are your meetings?

- i) 30 minutes
- ii) 1 hour
- iii) 2 hrs
- iv) Greater than 5

13. What themes have you discussed at the SCI?

- a) Push out from school
- b) HIV/ AIDS
- c) Unwanted pregnancy
- d) Early marriage
- e) Child labour
- f) Sexual abuse and exploitation
- g) Other. (Please specify) _____

14. Who introduced the SCI in your school?

- a) Teachers
- b) Pupils
- c) Visitors
- d) SCI club members from other schools
- e) Other. (Please specify) _____

15 a) Have you shared Sara's story with your family?

(Circle one) Yes No

b) Do you believe girls have more opportunities now than before the SCI?

(Circle one) Yes No Don't know

16. What activities do you engage in when you meet for SCI activities?

- a) Discussions
- b) Drama
- c) Singing
- d) Dancing
- e) Debates
- f) Other. (Please specify) _____

17. What materials do you use in SCI?

- a) Comic books
- b) Video tapes
- c) Audio tapes

- d) Charts
- e) Other. (Please specify) _____

18. What are Sara's problems?

- a) Works too hard at home
- b) No one helps her with schoolwork at home
- c) She has been told by her uncle to leave school
- d) Sara is pregnant
- e) Other. (Please specify) _____

Section C

19. What problems do some girls experience in your community?

(You may circle more than one)

- a) Dropping out of school early
- b) Unwanted pregnancies
- c) Overworked
- d) HIV/AIDS / STIs
- e) Early marriages
- f) Rape
- g) Other. (Please specify) _____

20. a) Have you heard about gender discrimination before? (Circle one) Yes No

If yes, continue answering the questions, from No. 20 (b).

If no, go to question No. 24 and continue to the end.

b) Girls might be discriminated against when: (You may circle more than one).

- i) Boys are more favoured than girls in the allocation of resources at home/school
- ii) Girls are abused verbally
- iii) When boys and male teachers bully girls at school.
- iv) Overworking girls more than boys
- v) Teachers impregnating girls
- vi) Other. (Please specify) _____

21. a) Did some girls experience gender discrimination before the SCI came to your school?

(Circle one) Yes No I don't know

If your answer is yes, go to No. 21 (b)

(b) In what ways were girls discriminated against

At home:

- (i) Worked more than boys
- (ii) Abused verbally
- (iii) Abused sexually
- (iv) Denied play
- (v) Forced to drop out of school
- (vi) Forced to marry early

At school:

- (i) Teased by teachers and boys
- (ii) Overworked than boys
- (iii) Exploited by teachers, for example, doing household chores in teachers' homes
- (iv) Sexually harassed by male teachers and boys, leading to pregnancy.
- (v) Not given equal chance to participate in class activities.

22. (a) Do some girls experience gender discrimination **now**, at home and at school?

(Circle one) Yes No I don't know

(b) If yes, circle the type of discrimination (you may circle more than one)

At home:

- (i) Worked more than boys
- (ii) Abused verbally
- (iii) Abused sexually
- (iv) Forced to drop out of school
- (v) Forced to marry early
- (vi) Other. (Please specify) _____

At school:

- (i) Teased by teachers and boys
- (ii) Overworked than boys
- (iii) Exploited by teachers, for example, doing household chores in teachers' homes
- (iv) Sexually harassed by male teachers and boys, leading to pregnancy.
- (v) Not given equal chance to participate in class activities.
- (vi) Other. (Please specify) _____

23. How do girls deal with gender discrimination

a) **at home?**

- i) Discuss with mother
- ii) Discuss with father
- iii) Discuss with friends
- iv) Discuss with relatives
- v) Other. (Please specify) _____

b) at school?

- i) Report to parents
- ii) Report to teachers
- iii) Report to SCI club members
- iv) Report to school committee
- v) Work harder in school
- vi) Other. (Please specify) _____

24. How many people live in your home? _____

25. When you have a problem, with whom do you share your problem? (You may circle more than one)

- (a) Mother
- (b) Father
- (c) Sister
- (d) Brother
- (e) Uncle
- (f) Aunt
- (g) Friends
- (h) Other. (Please specify) _____

26. Please circle the names of the groups to which you belong, apart from the SCI.

(You may circle more than one)

- (a) AIDS club
- (b) Drama club
- (c) Debate club
- (d) Netball team
- (e) Soccer team
- (f) None
- (g) Other. (Please specify) _____

27. Please, add any other comments about the SCI programme. (Please write at the back

of this page if you need more space) _____

APPENDIX M: Questionnaire for Students' Focus Groups

When I was here last time, I asked some of you to answer questions on paper. Today, I want us to talk more about some of the issues that were raised that time.

A. Overwork

1. Boys, can you tell me how you spend your day from morning up to night?
2. Girls, can you tell me how you spend your day from morning up to night?
3. The last time I visited this school, I was told by most of you that you believed that girls are overworked at home and school more than boys? Why do you believe that girls are overworked more than boys?
4. What do you think about that situation?
5. How do you think parents and teachers can help you (both boys and girls) work equal number of hours?
6. What can boys do to help their sisters at home?
7. What can girls do to help their brothers at home?

B. Push out from School

On this theme, most of you indicated that at the SCI clubs you discuss problems such as unwanted pregnancies, leaving school before completing, and HIV/AIDS.

Why do you think some girls and boys drop out of school before completion?

(Get reasons for home and school)

(a) What causes girls to have unwanted pregnancies?

(b) How many of you know a girl who has left school because of unwanted pregnancy?

What can you do to help others not leave school?

C. HIV/ AIDS and STI's

When I asked you the clubs you belonged to, apart from the SCI, most of you indicated that you were members of the AIDS club.

1. What do you understand by HIV/ AIDS?
2. What are the symptoms of HIV/ AIDS?
3. Do you know people in your community who are suffering from AIDS?
(Children should not mention names)
4. How are we supposed to relate to AIDS patients?
5. Do you think there are some behaviours of people in your community that might contribute to HIV/ AIDS and STIs? Which ones? and why?
6. As boys, how can you stop such behaviour in your community?
7. As girls, how can you stop such behaviour in your community?
8. What can you do as individuals to prevent the spread of HIV/ AIDS?

D. Gender Discrimination

A fourth issue that I asked you when I first visited this school concerned gender discrimination. When I asked you what you understood by gender discrimination, most of you indicated that girls can be discriminated when boys and men abuse them in different ways.

1. In what ways do boys and men abuse girls?
2. Do you know some girls who have been abused in your school or village?
3. What was done to assist the girls?
4. How can we prevent the abuses that you have mentioned from happening again?
5. Do you believe that there are some boys who can be abused too?
If **yes**, how? If **no**, why not?

E. Social Capital

Another question that I asked when I came was whom do you share your problems with, when you experience gender discrimination, general abuses or any other problems? Some of you indicated that you discussed with your mother, some indicated father, some brothers, teachers, other relatives or SCI friends.

1. Why do you tell your mother, father, brother, sister, or teacher?
2. What type of problems do you experience?
3. Do you like living in this village or rural township?
4. Do you feel safe living in this area? Yes (Why?) No (Why not?)
5. How many of you have relatives whom you visit close to your home, whether cousins, aunts, uncles, and other relatives? How often do you visit them?
6. How many of you have friends (boys or girls) with whom you discuss, or help each other with school assignments or home chores?
7. If you had a problem, and your parents are away, would you be able to ask your neighbour or friends to help you? Do you believe these people can help you?
8. If your parents, uncle, aunt, brother, or sister asked you to leave school the way Sara's uncle did, what would you do?
9. Apart from school and home activities, what do you engage in after school and after doing your chores at home?
10. Where do you go to engage in these activities?

APPENDIX N: Interview Guide for Parents' Focus Group

I. Thematic Question: What is the nature of the SCI?

1. What comes to mind when you hear of the Sara Communication Initiative?
2. Can someone summarize the story of Sara for us?
3. Do you believe that the story of Sara depicts the problems of girls clearly?
4. Is it possible that some girls in your community experience similar problems?
Yes No
5. If yes, can you give me examples of problems that girls' experience in your community?

II. Thematic Question: How was the SCI implemented?

1. Can you tell me how you heard about the SCI?
2. Who introduced the SCI to you?
3. What methods of presentation did they use?
4. Do you think the way the SCI was introduced in this community was effective?

III. Thematic Question: What are the perceptions of students, parents, and teachers about this programme?

1. Can you tell me how people felt about educating girls before the SCI?
2. Why do you think people reacted that way?
3. Do you believe people think differently about educating girls after the SCI?
4. Why do you believe so?

IV. Thematic Question: In what ways have attitudes and behaviours toward girls changed?

1. Do you believe boys and girls should be given equal opportunity to attend school? Yes No
2. If yes, why? If no, why not?
3. If you had a son and a daughter and were given a chance to educate one of them, who would you send to school?
(a) If son, why?
(b) If a daughter, why?
4. Why is it beneficial to educate girls as well as boys?
5. In what ways has the community contributed towards girls' access, retention, and achievement in school?

V. Thematic Question: To what extent has the social capital of girls been enhanced?

1. Since we know that in order for a community to develop, people must work together,
 - (a) Do you have community groups apart from the SCI?

Yes
No
 - (b) If yes, can you name the groups?
2. Are some of you members of these groups? Yes No
3. If yes, who belongs to:

Name of Group	Number Belonging
a)Farmers /Fisherman's Group	
b)Trader's Association/ Business Group	
c)Cooperative	
d)Women's Group	
e)Credit Finance Group	
f)Political group	
g)Religious	
h)Cultural Association	
i) Neighbourhood/ Village Association	
j) Parent Group	
k) School Committee	
l)Health Committee	
m)Water/ Waste	
n) Sports group	
o) Civic group	
p) Non Governmental Organization	
q) Professional Association	
r) Trade Union	
s) Other	
Total	

List Copied from World Bank Document-

4. How many of you are active members of the groups you belong to?
5. (a) Do you think by belonging to this group you have acquired new skills or learnt something valuable?
 - i) Yes
 - ii) No
 - iii) Don't know/not sure

- 5 (b) If yes, what skills?

Networks:

6. If the primary school of this community went without a teacher for a long time, say six months or more, which people in this community do you think would get together to take some action about it?

Social cohesion and inclusion:

7. (a) How is the sense of closeness in this community?
- (b) Do you have differences among people in this village?
If yes, which differences most often cause problems?
8. (a) When people talk about lack of “well being” what do you think of?

Responses might include the fact that some people:

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) Are disabled (i.e. blind, crippled, mentally impaired, chronically sick)(b) Are widowed(c) lack land, livestock, farm equipment, a grinding mill(d) cannot decently bury their dead(e) cannot send their children to school(f) have more mouths –to- feed, fewer hands to help(g) Lack able-bodied members who can fend for their families in crisis(h) Have bad housing(i) Have vices(j) Are ‘poor in people,’ lacking social support/solidarity(k) having to put children in employment(l) single parent |
|---|

Adapted from the internet by Chambers, R, IDS Discussion Paper 347, 1995

- (b) Do you think there are some differences concerning well being, which cause people not to belong to groups?
- (c) If yes, which ones?
9. What can be done to improve the situation?
10. (a) Do you feel that women’s and girls’ lives have improved since the SCI?
- (b) In what ways?

APPENDIX O: Interview Guide for Teachers

One of the objectives of the Sara Communication Initiative (SCI) as stated in the comic book *The Special Gift* suggests that girls should be encouraged to take science and technical subjects. I would like to find out more about your experiences teaching boys and girls mathematics and science.

Before we start the interview, I would like you to provide me with the following information:

Demographics

1. Name _____ of school _____
Zone _____
2. Gender Female _____ Male _____
3. Teaching experience _____ years
4. Class you teach: 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8

Perceptions about SCI

5. When was the SCI introduced in your school?
6. When did you start coordinating the SCI?
7. What subjects do you teach regularly?
 - (a) Mathematics
 - (b) Science/ Technology
 - (c) Other. Please specify
8. How many periods per week do you teach mathematics and science in your classes?
9. Is it true that girls generally score lower marks in mathematics and science? Is this true in your school?

Yes No

If yes, can you tell me the reasons for this?

10 (a) Describe the impact of SCI on students' motivation to learn mathematics and science, with particular attention to girls.

(b) Do you notice change in girls' participation?

11. (a) Do you have documented evidence of students' performance in mathematics and science?

Yes

No

(b) Please explain.

12. Do you feel girls have more opportunities now than before the SCI?

13. (a) How can you rate the attendance of girls at this school in general?

Very good ____ Good ____ Average ____ Poor ____ Very poor

If poor or very poor,

(b) Why?

14. (a) Do girls drop out in this school?

(b) If yes, why?

15. What are parents, teachers, and the community doing to encourage girls to stay in school?

16. (a) Are girls given the same opportunity as boys to be in school?

(b) Do girls have access to school facilities as boys?

17. What can you do to improve the performance of girls in school?

18. Do you have any other comments about the SCI programme?

APPENDIX P: Interview Guide for the UNICEF Representative

1. Could you outline for me the objectives of the SCI?
2. What is your overall assessment of the SCI from its inception to the present?
3. What if anything should the SCI programme do more of, better, or differently?
4. Can you describe any issues that, in your view the SCI should be addressing that are not being addressed at present?
5. If you were the originator of the SCI and had the authority to change anything, what would you change?
6. (a) From your observations, is the SCI programme is working?

(b) Please explain.
7. Do you have any other comments to concerning the SCI programme?

APPENDIX Q: Interview Guide for the Forum for African Women Educationalists in Malawi (FAWEMA)

Since you are the caretakers of the SCI in Malawi, I would like to ask you a few questions concerning the programme.

1. What are the objectives of the SCI?
2. What are the strengths of FAWEMA as the caretaker of SCI?
3. What are the weaknesses of FAWEMA in the management of the SCI?
4. How are you planning to sustain the strengths of the SCI?
5. How are you planning to address the weaknesses in the management of the SCI?
6. What changes would you like to see in the management of the SCI nationally, regionally, and locally?
7. What would be your overall assessment of the SCI programme?
8. Would you have any other comments about the SCI programme?

APPENDIX R: Classroom Observation Instrument

1. Group Dynamics Observations:

(a) How are team roles assigned?

(b) What roles are assigned the various members of the team by gender?

(c) Does the instructor intervene in role assignments? If so, how?

2 (a) Does the teacher use gender bias when presenting examples in class?

(b) Do materials in class reflect diversity?

3. Do all the team members participate in the hands- on activities regardless of gender?

4. Team conversations / discussions:

(c) (a) Are there interruptions during discussions? If yes, what type of interruptions?

(b) If so, who interrupts whom?

(c) Does one person monopolize the discussion?

APPENDIX S: Class Observation Form

Instructor _____ **School** _____

Date _____ **Time** _____

Class observations – Record occurrences by gender

1. Who asks questions in class? (same students, variety of students, etc.)
2. How do students ask questions? (e.g. raising hands or just blurting out)
3. What is the seating arrangement within the class/ workshop?
4. How do students select seats?
5. Are there dead zones? (areas where students are never called upon)
6. If the class is grouped for discussions, are the groups divided by gender?

<i>Class</i>	<i>Male Asks</i>	<i>Female Asks</i>	<i>Male Answers</i>	<i>Female Answers</i>	<i>Same Variety</i>	<i>Blurt/ Hands</i>	<i>Gender (Y/N)</i>	<i>Zone</i>

Class observations – Record occurrences by gender

1. Whom does the teacher call for responses?
2. Does the level of difficulty of the question make a difference when calling on students?
(Variety of students, same students)
3. With whom does the teacher make eye contact?
4. How does the instructor respond to answers/ questions? (To record praise and comments
based on gender)

<i>Class</i>	<i>Called on Males</i>	<i>Called on Females</i>	<i>Difficult (Y/N)</i>	<i>Variety</i>	<i>Contact Males</i>	<i>Contact Females</i>	<i>Praise Males</i>	<i>Praise Females</i>

Adapted from OERL instruments: Under- Represented Populations, from
<http://oerl.sri.com/instruments/up/obsclassrm/instr117.html>

APPENDIX T: MAP OF MALAWI

